

SOUTH AFRICA'S LEADING GAMING, COMPUTER & TECHNOLOGY MAGAZINE

# NAG

PC PLAYSTATION XBOX WII

## BORDERLANDS

### SPECIAL EDITION DOUBLE COVER MADNESS!\*

We drill through BioShock 2 and bring home some fat loot from the wilds of Borderlands

#### PREVIEWS

Age hands on with Saboteur | Brutal Legend  
Dragon Age: Origins | Ratchet & Clank: A Crack in Time

#### REVIEWS

WET | Halo 3: ODST | Need for Speed: Shift | The Beatles:  
Rock Band | Velvet Assassin | Risen | Guitar Hero 5

#### WINDOWS 7 BENCHMARKED

Will upgrading to Windows 7 run games faster than Vista?

#### RADEON 5870

The fastest single GPU ever made



I don't miss the cover DVD. The magazine of this DVD is recoverable to limiting by a single person only. Act according to know the magazine much question to ask normally lost. Do finding of this magazine DVD normal to make dissatisfied of reporting.



Special Edition: Cover 1

VOL.12 ISSUE 8 11.2009 SOUTH AFRICA R42.00



\* That's right! Act now! Buy two copies (we've got bills to pay)



SOUTH AFRICA'S LEADING GAMING, COMPUTER & TECHNOLOGY MAGAZINE

# NAG

PC PLAYSTATION XBOX WII



## BIOSHOCK 2

### SPECIAL EDITION DOUBLE COVER MADNESS!\*

We drill through BioShock 2 and bring home some fat lewt from the wilds of Borderlands

### PREVIEWS

rAge hands on with Saboteur | Brutal Legend  
Dragon Age: Origins | Ratchet & Clank: A Crack in Time

### REVIEWS

WET | Halo 3: ODST | Need for Speed: Shift | The Beatles:  
Rock Band | Velvet Assassin | Risen | Guitar Hero 5

### WINDOWS 7 BENCHMARKED

Will upgrading to Windows 7 run games faster than Vista?

### RADEON 5870

The fastest single GPU ever made



Special Edition: Cover 2

VOL.12 ISSUE 8 11.2009 SOUTH AFRICA R42.00



1 1

9 771028 053002

I don't miss the cover DVD. The magazine of this DVD is recoverable to limiting by a single person only. Act according to know the magazine much question to ask normally lost. Do finding of this magazine DVD normal to make dissatisfied of reporting.

\* That's right! Act now! Buy two copies (we've got bills to pay)









# CALL<sup>OF</sup>DUTY MODERN



10TH NOVEMBER 2009

THE SEQUEL TO THE  
BEST-SELLING FIRST-PERSON ACTION GAME OF ALL-TIME.



"THIS YEAR'S,  
PERHAPS THE DECADE'S,  
MOST ANTICIPATED GAME"

— OFFICIAL XBOX MAGAZINE

# WARFARE 2



CHECK OUT: [MODERNWARFARE2.COM](http://MODERNWARFARE2.COM)



ACTIVISION  
[activision.com](http://activision.com)

megarom  
[www.megarom.co.za](http://www.megarom.co.za)  
K27 11 261 4800 / sales@megarom.co.za



© 2009 Activision Publishing, Inc. Activision, Call of Duty and Modern Warfare are registered trademarks of Activision Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.  
All other trademarks and trade names are the properties of their respective owners. All rights reserved.



# LATEST RELEASES FROM INCREDIBLE CONNECTION

## CALL OF DUTY

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| PS3 (MODERN WARFARE 2)                               | R699.95   |
| XBOX360 (MODERN WARFARE 2)                           | R699.95   |
| Nintendo DS (MODERN WARFARE 2 MOBILIZED)             | R399.95** |
| Nintendo Wii (MODERN WARFARE 2 REFLEX)               | R499.95** |
| PC DVD (MODERN WARFARE 2) AVAILABLE 24 NOVEMBER 2009 |           |
|  | R499.95   |

AVAILABLE 10 NOVEMBER 2009

CALL OF DUTY  
MODERN WARFARE  
11.10.09

22



## ASSASSIN'S CREED II

### ASSASSIN'S CREED II

|                          |           |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| PS3                      | R699.95   |
| PSP (BLOOD LINES)        | R399.95** |
| Nintendo Wii (DISCOVERY) | R399.95** |
| XBOX360                  | R699.95   |

AVAILABLE 20 NOVEMBER 2009



JAMES CAMERON'S  
**AVATAR**  
THE GAME

| AVATAR       |           |
|--------------|-----------|
| PC           | R399.95   |
| PS3          | R699.95   |
| PSP          | R399.95** |
| Nintendo Wii | R499.95   |
| Nintendo DS  | R399.95** |
| XBOX360      | R699.95   |

**AVAILABLE 4 DECEMBER 2009**

**AVAILABLE IN ALL STORES IN NOVEMBER**

**PS2 R899.95**

**PS3 R999.95**

**XBOX360 R999.95**

**Wii R999.95**



**Incredible**  
**CONNECTION**

Where technology & humanity meet

\* RELEASE DATES MAY CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE FROM SUPPLIER.

\*\* Selected stores: Alberton, Canal Walk, Eastgate, East Rand Retail Park, Gateway, Menlyn, Pavilion, Sandton & V&A Waterfront

Incredible Call Centre 0860 011 700

Prices include 14% VAT. Prices stated herein are recommended retail and are subject to change. Credit approval is subject to the terms and conditions as stipulated on the application forms. All standard terms and conditions of Incredible Connection & suppliers herein apply. One year warranty on all hardware. E&OE.





## November 2009 NAG DVD Contents

### Regulars

- 8 Ed's Note
- 10 Inbox
- 14 Bytes
- 76 Looking Back – Commandos: Ammo Pack
- 78 Lifestyle – Comics
- 82 Lifestyle – Figurines
- 114 Game Over

### Opinion

- 26 Miktar's Meanderings
- 28 I, Gamer
- 90 Hardwired
- 92 Life, Hardware and Ch@ps

### Features

- 30 Borderlands
- 38 BioShock 2
- 94 Lucky 7s: Windows 7 vs. Windows Vista

### Previews

- 44 Brütal Legend
- 46 Dragon Age: Origins
- 48 The Saboteur
- 50 Ratchet & Clank Future: A Crack in Time

### Reviews

- 52 Reviews: Introduction
- 54 Halo 3: ODST [360]
- 58 The Beatles: Rock Band [PS3]
- 60 Guitar Hero 5 [360]
- 62 Need for Speed: Shift [360]
- 64 WET [360]
- 66 Velvet Assassin [360]
- 68 Marvel: Ultimate Alliance 2 [360]
- 70 Ashes Cricket 2009 [360]
- 72 East India Company [PC]
- 73 Risen [360]
- 74 The Secret of Monkey Island: Special Edition [PC]
- 75 Hearts of Iron III [PC]

### Hardware

- 84 Hardware News
- 86 Inbox
- 88 Dream Machine
- 98 ASUS EAH5870
- 100 MSI Radeon R4890 Cyclone OC
- 102 GIGABYTE GA-P55-UD6
- 104 MSI P55-GD80
- 106 ASUS P7P55D
- 108 GIGABYTE GA-MA790FXT-UD5P
- 110 BIOSTAR TPower X58
- 111 Corsair DOMINATOR PC3-12800 6GB Triple-Channel Kit
- 112 DFI LANParty BloodIron G41-T33
- 113 Nokia 5530 XpressMusic

### Demos

Empire of Steel | Machinarium | Majesty 2: The Fantasy Kingdom Sim | Risen | Tropico 3 | Zuma's Revenge!

### Drivers

All the updated drivers will be on the December NAG DVD. We just didn't have space this month...

### Extras

ESET Trial | GAMECCA September 2009 Volume 1 Issue 3

### Cubeecraft

Resident Evil 1 - 4

### Free Games

Boxcraft | Homeworld: Raider Retreat | Spelunky | Tower of Heaven

### Patches

Call of Duty: World at War - Patch v1.6

### Videos

3D Dot Game Heroes - Debut Trailer | Aion - Launch Trailer | Army of Two: The 40th Day - Co-Op Walkthrough Part 1 | Army of Two: The 40th Day - Co-Op Walkthrough Part 2 | Army of Two: The 40th Day - Co-Op Walkthrough Part 3 | Army of Two: The 40th Day - Co-Op Walkthrough Part 4 | Assassin's Creed II - Visions of Venice Trailer | Batman: Arkham Asylum - 'Totally Insane' | Beaterator - Features Trailer | Borderlands - Character Trailer | Borderlands - Claptrap Behind the Scenes Episode 1 | Borderlands - Claptrap Behind the Scenes Episode 2 | Borderlands - Split Screen | Brütal Legend - Axe Wielding Trailer | Brütal Legend - Brutal Thoughts Part VI | Brütal Legend - Brutal Thoughts Legend - Handy Ladies' Man Gameplay Trailer | Brütal Legend - Brutal Thoughts Legend - Kabbage Boy Cinematic | Champions Online - 'A World of Champions' Developer Diary | Color Changing Tingle's Love Balloon Trip - Intro Cinematic | Contra ReBirth - Multiplayer | CSI: Deadly Intent - Developer Diary | Dante's Inferno - Greed Developer Diary | Dead Rising 2 - Terror Is Reality Multiplayer Trailer | DeathSpank - Lore Trailer | Demon's Souls - Story Walkthrough | Demon's Souls - Visceral Action Trailer | Colin McRae: DiRT 2 - Jump Jam Launch Trailer | DJ Hero - Daft Punk Trailer | Dragon Age: Origins - Leliana Cinematic Trailer | Dungeons & Dragons Online - History Trailer | F.E.A.R. 2: Project Origin - Replica Gone Rogue | Fairytale Fights - Fairytale Carnage Trailer | Forza Motorsport 3 - 2009 Bugatti Veyron 16.4 | Forza Motorsport 3 - Sedona Raceway | Garshasp - Debut Trailer | GC 09 - Lost Planet 2 Tropical Forest | GC 09 - Napoleon Total War - Announcement Trailer | Gran Turismo PSP - Laguna Seca Documentary | Grand Theft Auto: The Ballad of Gay Tony - Debut Trailer | Guild Wars 2 - Evil Rises | Halo 3: ODST - Flashback | Halo 3: ODST - Live Action Trailer Extended Cut | Halo 3: ODST - Making Of The Live Action Trailer | Heavy Rain - Corner Store | Just Cause 2 - Vertical Documentary | Kingdom Hearts Birth By Sleep - Epic Showdown Trailer | Left 4 Dead: Crash Course DLC | LostWinds: Winter of the Melodias Trailer | Lucidity - Debut Trailer | Macross Ultimate Frontier - Japanese Debut Trailer | Majesty 2 - Destruction and Mayhem | Marvel: Ultimate Alliance 2 - Launch Trailer | Marvel: Ultimate Alliance 2 - Stan Lee Cameo | Mass Effect 2 - Subject Zero Trailer | Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2 - Flag Runner Multiplayer Trailer | Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2 - Infamy Trailer | MotorStorm: Arctic Edge - Speed Race | Motto! Hamster to Rasou | Need for Speed: Shift - Car Battle Trailer | Need for Speed: Shift - Game Montage | Need for Speed: Shift - Launch Trailer | Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2 - Launch Trailer | Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2 - Outdoor | PAX 09 - Dante's Inferno - Montage | PAX 09 - Darksiders - Downtown | PAX 09 - Darksiders - Manager Interview | PAX 09 - Darksiders - Welcome Party | PAX 09 - DeathSpank - Creator Interview | PAX 09 - Left 4 Dead 2 - Carnival Gates | PAX 09 - Left 4 Dead 2 - Escape | PAX 09 - Left 4 Dead 2 - Guitar Melee | PAX 09 - Left 4 Dead 2 - Jockey Campaign Start | PAX 09 - Left 4 Dead 2 - Tank Assault | PAX 09 - No More Heroes 2 Upgrades | PAX 09 - Resident Evil TDC | PAX 09 - Shank Trailer Part 1 | PAX 09 - Shank Trailer Part 2 | PAX 09 - Tekken 6 Battle | PAX 09 - The Saboteur - Tom French | Interview | PAX 09 - Uncharted 2: Among Thieves - Creative Director | PAX 09 - Uncharted 2: Among Thieves - Train | Ratchet & Clank Future: A Crack in Time - Game Montage | S.T.A.L.K.E.R.: Call of Pripyat - Environment | Scribblenauts Developer Diary | Section 8 - Deadly Force Trailer | Section 8 Trailer | Star Wars: The Force Unleashed: Ultimate Sith Edition - Game Trailer | TGS 09 - Ninety-Nine Nights II - Debut Trailer | TGS 09 - Assassin's Creed II - Ezio Destiny Trailer | TGS 09 - Assassin's Creed II - Locked Content | TGS 09 - James Cameron's Avatar: The Game - Overview Interview | TGS 09 - Forza Motorsport 3 - New Modes Walkthrough | TGS 09 - Gamer Trailer | TGS 09 - Gyromancer - Debut Trailer | TGS 09 - Jak and Daxter - Customisation Interview | TGS 09 - Left 4 Dead 2 - Improvements Interview | TGS 09 - Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker - Cooperative Game Trailer Part 1 | TGS 09 - Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker - Cooperative Game Trailer Part 2 | TGS 09 - Okamiden - Extended Japanese Trailer | TGS 09 - PixelJunk Shooter - New Features Interview | TGS 09 - Resident Evil 5: Alternative Edition - Chris Kramer Interview | TGS 09 - Toy Soldiers - Battlefield Trailer | TGS 09 - Toy Soldiers - Debut Trailer | TGS 09 - Super Street Fighter IV | Tony Hawk: Ride Interview Developer | Valhalla Knights: Eldar Saga | WET shoot out | White Knight Chronicles

### LOL

Bee | Big Boy | Drunk | Goal | Ouch+ | Ouch | Water R9800

### ScrewAttack

Anticipation | Awesome Possum | Conker's Bad Fur Day | Darkwing Duck | Doom SNES | Kirby's Dream Land | Rampage | Ren & Stimpy: Buckaroos | Streets of Rage | Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 | Virtua Fighter Kids





DICK MARCINKO

# ROGUE WARRIOR™

ROGUEWARRIOR.COM

AVAILABLE NOVEMBER

**Bethesda**  
SOFTWARES  
a ZeniMax Media company

 Games for Windows

 XBOX 360

XBOX  
LIVE

 PLAYSTATION 3



**NuMetro**  
interactive

Rogue Warrior™ ©2009 Bethesda Softworks LLC, a ZeniMax Media company. Distributed under license from Richard Marcinko Inc. Bethesda Softworks, ZeniMax and related logos are registered trademarks or trademarks of ZeniMax Media Inc. in the U.S. and/or other countries. Rogue Warrior is a registered trademark or trademark of Richard Marcinko Inc. Developed in association with Rebellion Interactive Games Ltd. Rebellion and the Rebellion logo are registered trademarks or trademarks, used under license. All Rights Reserved. Microsoft, Windows, the Windows Vista Start button, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies, and "Games for Windows" and the Windows Vista Start button logo are used under license from Microsoft. "PS", "PLAYSTATION" and "PS Move" are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.





## Done Later Content

**WE'VE BEEN GETTING** A lot of mails regarding DLC. Some people say it's a rip-off and similar to buying a car where you get the tin, rubber and engine and must then add things such as electric windows and seats. Other people just love the game so much that they don't care if the first batch of DLC is available on the same day the retail game is released. You know what I think? (This might just rock the whole industry to its knees.) Consider the following scenario: you've just bought *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2* or *Diablo III* and immediately after installing it you...

>> Please enter your credit card details to read the rest of this message <<

### RAGE 2009

*rAge* 2009 represented a seven-year itch: this is a traditional relationship term where couples get 'itchy' after seven years and start shopping around. It's difficult to believe that we've been doing this show for seven years – from its very humble and pioneering beginnings, to the out-of-control monster it has become today. Every year we learn new lessons, and every year we're presented with opportunities to learn more.

Commercially, the show was a success this year with 19,488 visitors through the door – more than ever before. These visitors also brought some serious spending power to the show, almost oblivious to the media-hyped recession many of us are feeling in small and big ways. The great thing about this industry is that the 'demographic' love what they do and will forgo other luxuries just to get that new game or top-of-the-range graphics card. This was also the first year that all the serious game publishers and distributors were at the show; and considering the tight budgets this year, they all did an amazing job with their stands and promotions. Their spirit and can-do attitude were truly remarkable to witness.

I also have to thank everyone who participated in *rAge* 2009: from my management team to the eight-year-old boy who came with his dad to the NAG LAN. Everyone, no matter how small the role or contribution, makes a big difference to the 'whole'. So, thank you all for making everything work. You are the industry building blocks that will see gaming in South Africa grow and grow.

So, all good then... I should be feeling really happy with how everything went. It was a close-to-flawless event and a commercial success, but there's this nagging feeling that the show wasn't special. I'm going to 'fire' a little blame at the global economic situation: there just wasn't enough 'budget' to add all the extras we like to each year. I also think that the seven-year itch was to blame a little. Most of the show runs on automatic, with the same clients doing the same things in the same place. This is dangerous, because the management team (and I'm going to peddle an old one here) stops looking at the trees and starts looking at the forest. We start considering everything commercially and stop thinking about what inspired us to start this whole crazy gig in the first place – the gaming community. This community, past, current and future, is why we do everything we do, and I feel that we didn't do everything we could this year to make it extra special. Perhaps the weight of the recession and the seven years of doing this show added up. I'm not saying it wasn't fun and amazing and all that great PR stuff. It was, but I like making it special.

The good news is that we're compiling a super list of things we and everyone else didn't like. Send mail to [rage@tidemedia.co.za](mailto:rage@tidemedia.co.za). Then, we're going to start from the ground up and try to put together something really different and amazing to carry us through the next seven or so years. Think of *rAge* 2010 as a patched version of the show – *rAge* 2.0 for 2010. Look forward to seeing you there.

Michael James  
Editor



## Cover Story

As you can see, we have two different covers, featuring two different games this issue. Usually, this is impossible to pull off because covers are carefully arranged based on exclusivity, relationships and usually involve overseas trips, beer and free food. As luck would have it, in this case, both games are from the same publisher! So, they don't mind if we shower both with some good *NAG* loving. This situation came about because nobody could decide which cover was the best for this issue of *NAG*. Thanks to Dave from 2K and the people at Megarom for making this possible.



# NAG

#### editor

michael james  
[michael.james@tidemedia.co.za](mailto:michael.james@tidemedia.co.za)

#### technical writer

neo sibeko

#### staff writer

alex jelagin

#### failed commandos

geoff burrows  
dane remendes

#### contributing editors

lauren das Neves  
regardt van der berg

#### copy editor

nati de jager

#### international correspondents

miktat dracon  
alexander gambotto-burke

#### contributors

clive burmeister  
adam liebman  
walt pretorius  
miklós szecsei  
tarryn van der byl

#### art director

chris bistline

#### assistant art director

chris savides

#### photography

chris bistline  
[dreamstime.com](http://dreamstime.com)

#### sales manager

dave gore  
[dave.gore@tidemedia.co.za](mailto:dave.gore@tidemedia.co.za)  
+27 82 829 1392

#### sales executive

cheryl bassett  
[cheryl.bassett@tidemedia.co.za](mailto:cheryl.bassett@tidemedia.co.za)  
+27 72 322 9875

#### marketing and promotions manager

jacqui jacobs  
[jacqui.jacobs@tidemedia.co.za](mailto:jacqui.jacobs@tidemedia.co.za)  
+27 82 778 8439

#### office assistant

paul ndebele

#### tide media

p o box 237  
olivedale  
2158  
south africa  
tel +27 11 704 2679  
fax +27 11 704 4120

#### subscription department

[subs@tidemedia.co.za](mailto:subs@tidemedia.co.za)

#### internet

[www.nag.co.za](http://www.nag.co.za)  
[www.tidemedia.co.za](http://www.tidemedia.co.za)

#### printing

ctp johannesburg

#### distribution

jmd distribution



Copyright 2009 Tide Media. All rights reserved. No article or picture in this magazine may be reproduced, copied or transmitted in any form whatsoever without the express written consent of the Publisher. Opinions expressed in the magazine are not necessarily those of the Publisher or the Editors. All Trademarks and Registered Trademarks are the sole property of their respective owners.

We're sorry. We're all out of funny. Please try again later.

NAG REVIEW RIGS SUPPLIED BY:

**GIGABYTE**  
Quality is Everything

Ultra Durable CLASSIC  
20Z Copper PCB  
50,000 Hours Life  
Dual BIOS

Extreme X

DYNAMIC ENERGY SAVING





## Guaranteed Protection

meets

**military grade**

drop test standards



## StoreJet™ 25 **mobile**

Available in: 160GB / 250GB / 320GB / 500GB

- Hi-Speed USB 2.0 compliant and USB 1.1 backwards compatible
- Easy Plug and Play installation
- Ultra-Portability
- Additional software pack :StoreJet elite (helps you manage your data)
- OneTouch Auto-Backup function
- Powered via the USB port. No external power or battery needed
- LED indicates power on and data access



For more information please visit [www.rectron.co.za](http://www.rectron.co.za) or call 0860 582 835 / For Support call our National Technical Support Line: 0861 788 789

**Johannesburg:**  
Tel: (011) 203 1000  
Fax: (011) 203 1940

**Cape Town:**  
Tel: (021) 555 7136  
Fax: (021) 555 7187

**Durban:**  
Tel: (031) 571 8839  
Fax: (031) 571 8865

**Port Elizabeth:**  
Tel: (041) 398 7082  
Fax: (041) 398 7135

**Bloemfontein:**  
Tel: (051) 430 0000  
Fax: (051) 430 1144



## Letter of the Moment

**FROM:** Dries

**SUBJECT:** Getting my way, the South African way

**"HERE I WAS SITTING** with the latest NAG on my lap, reading the Inbox, thinking to myself, 'Hmm, there has to be a way to get those fabulous prizes without exerting my abused brain'; and then it struck me: This is South Africa, right? The land where only the most savage burglars manage to survive, and only the toughest citizens... (pulls a cyber-pistol). Ha! Got distracted by my little monologue, didn't you? All right, let's not make a fuss. Just keep your hands where I can see them... this is a hold-up. Now, hand me that Letter of the Moment title, nice and slow. That's right. Nice and slow. Thank the lord this is one of the few countries where crime pays. Huh? (My details are... [Removed, Ed]) So you know where to send the goods. Don't bother trying to give it to the cops – they're already in my pocket."

*Okay, okay! Just take what you want and leave. My bank PIN code is 98902 and the car keys are on the kitchen table. Ed.*



The 'Letter of the Moment' prize is sponsored by MegaRom. The winner receives two games for coming up with the most eclectic chicken scratch.

**IMPORTANT STUFF! PAY ATTENTION!**

Land Mail: P.O. Box 237, Olivedale, 2158  
Cyber mail: [letters@tidemedia.co.za](mailto:letters@tidemedia.co.za)  
Important: Include your details when mailing us, otherwise how will you ever get your prize if you win...



**FROM:** Tighe

**SUBJECT:** NAG offers diminishing value

**"IN THE YEAR THAT** I have been a subscriber, NAG has shrunk. My first issue, March 2008, contained 144 pages. My latest (August 2009) contained 100 pages. This is a decrease of 45%. In the same period, the price of the magazine increased by 7.6%. In the last five issues, there have been more than 400 videos on the DVD. It seems to me that this is an easy way to fill up space with promotional material. I would much rather get game demos, patches and modifications – the last modification was published in January 2009! I am a Cape Town subscriber. Most of my NAG magazines have arrived late. The current issue is now three weeks overdue. I'm beginning to feel that I would rather pay more for issues on the shelf to avoid this frustration."

*You are correct: NAG has 'shrunk'. The great thing about publishing is that we can't hide anything. It's all out in the open for everyone to see. However, in all fairness, we haven't increased the price of NAG in years. The last price increase was necessary to keep up with the ridiculous cost of printing and endless 'paper' increases that the whole publishing industry has to put up with. We're also in a recession, so a number of companies have suspended advertising until next year – we have no control over this. We'd*

*like nothing more than a 'bigger' NAG ourselves. In terms of the DVD, we'll take your suggestions into consideration. We did conduct a survey recently, and most people asked us for more videos and demos – the DVD is a tricky beast to balance properly. I can also tell you that processing and checking hundreds of videos is definitely not easier than a few patches and demos – the only time it's convenient is when filling up the smaller gaps. In terms of the subscriber copies, all I can do is say sorry. As much as we'd love to get subscriber copies out quicker, it's just not possible. We put together the last few pages of NAG around two weeks before it ends up on the shelves – this is to ensure that the content is relevant. Couple this with our pathetic postal service (they were striking around the time of your mail), and you can see where this is going. I hate to say it, but there is no time benefit to subscribing – only a financial one. Thanks for the mail, and I do hope you keep reading. Ed.*

**FROM:** Dillon

**SUBJECT:** Advice

**"MY GOAL IN LIFE** is to move into the career of being a game producer and designer (even a gaming journalist), but I don't know what to study or where to go to be able to achieve my goal. Could you give me advice on what I should do and where I should go and even what are the personal requirements and where would be the best place to go and study for this? It would really help with my job shadowing project."

*You know, your mail got me wondering why colleges and universities don't advertise in NAG magazine around the end of the year... I mean, we've won the Gold Award for Youth Culture Magazine two years in a row now, and we've got endless batches of very intelligent readers escaping high school every year – all looking for a higher calling. Perhaps these institutions are not as smart as one would like to think. I guess the best thing to do is to visit a few Websites and make a few calls to these places and ask them yourself. I'm not really qualified to be giving out advice like this. I'll have angry parents calling me, and I've just managed to dodge the bullet on the whole violence in gaming fiasco. ;) Ed.*

**FROM:** Richard

**SUBJECT:** Typing error

**"DID YOU SEE THAT** typing error on page 23; at 'Caption of the month', it says that the winner will win PES 2001 but the picture is PES 2010."

*Stupid designers... Actually, we pretty much blame them for everything that's wrong in the magazine. That way, the editorial staff always looks good. Ed.*

*Stupid editors... If they'd just read the type that went into the magazine, we wouldn't have these problems. AD.*

**FROM:** Michael

**SUBJECT:** Editor for SACM and NAG

**"I DON'T KNOW WHO ELSE** to contact as I cannot find details on the Web (have you tried the magazine? Ed). I would like to contact both the editors for NAG and SACM regarding reader e-mails and how I could e-mail the magazines in hope of my e-mail being placed in the magazine."

*Is this okay? Ed.*

**FROM:** Blessing

**SUBJECT:** Is it just me?

**"HI NAG; I'M HOPING** you guys can help me. What's the deal with downloadable content? Because I think it's the biggest rip-off ever! It seems to me that game developers are selling incomplete games to us gamers, and then months later, sell the content which should have been in the game in the first place! I understand the GTA DLC (Lost and Damned) because that's like a new game and it's worth it (sort of), but why must I go and download extra outfits for Street Fighter or Soul Calibur? They should already be there! It really grinds my gears because games are now expensive and they seem to be shorter and shorter (cough, cough, Gears of War 2, cough); then those slimy developers sell us 'extra' content. I'm curious what you guys think."

*This is what I think: DLC is an excellent concept when done right (new multiplayer maps, more zombies and new outfits), but a cheap tactic when done wrong (episodic levels and critical updates, padded with pointless extras and new outfits). Remember, you don't have to buy any of this stuff. So, if you don't like it, then vote with your wallet. Ed.*

**FROM:** Willem

**SUBJECT:** Batman: Arkham Asylum

"The other day, I was chilling at a friend's house where I played *Batman: Arkham Asylum*. The game was awesome but was ruined by a few nasty glitches. For example, Batman decides to grapple onto an object that does not exist, which then causes him to be dragged through the walls and into blackness; which forces you to restart, but isn't nearly as bad as when Batman does not want to lock onto a ledge which denies you the leisure to advance further into the level... When I asked my buddy if I could see the box he told me he didn't have it. It's then when I realised I was playing a pirated version. Now I want buy this game. But it's pricey. Thus, I need to know from you guys if the original *Batman: Arkham Asylum* has those same faults. I'm usually quite forgiving if a game gives you a few bugs and glitches. But a glitch that denies you to continue the game – yeah, that just pisses me off..."

*This is from the official [www.eidosgames.com](http://www.eidosgames.com) forum: "The problem you have encountered is a hook in the copy protection, to catch out people who*



# WHEN BEING NOTICED IS A PRIORITY.

The LG KP265 has an original design, combining great features and style with a simple slide. The introduction of stereo dynamics at the bottom of the hull allows for loud and high quality sound. Other great features include bluetooth, a 1.3MP camera and an integrated music player with an FM tuner and MP3. The LG KP265 music phone will be turning heads wherever you go.

**Free 1 GB Micro SD Card.**

## LG KP265

[www.lge.co.za](http://www.lge.co.za)

Customer care 0800 LG LG LG

Mon - Sat 08:00 - 17:00



# LG

Life's Good





try and download cracked versions of the game for free. It's not a bug in the game's code, it's a bug in your moral code." The original game has no such bugs; so buy it, and enjoy it. It's an awesome game that many people worked long and hard on. Then, tell your stupid, criminal 'friend' to enjoy his blank DVD. You should also rethink your choice of friends. If he'd already stolen a game, who knows what else he does when nobody is looking. Ed.

**FROM:** Mark

**SUBJECT:** A cuter bunny (thing) for NAG

**"THANK YOU NAG FOR** your cute bunny in the September issue, but here is a cuter one. A friend who recently came back from America told me that an American wouldn't use the word 'cute' to describe an animal, like the bunny. They would look at you strangely and think that only humans could be cute in any conceivable way. Is this a language barrier or does it extend to cultural differences?" [Snip, Ed]

*Thanks for the picture. I can't speak on behalf of the Americans (too risky; I don't want an aircraft carrier showing up in my pool). ;)* No really, we have an American in the office and he said your friend is an idiot and wants to know where he/she lives and if he/she has a pool. Ed. [Continues, Ed]

"Seeing that these days gamers have their own language they can use (i.e. LOL), do game developers customise their games to suit their largest target market's culture or just popular culture at the time? Duh, it must be the first because the world revolves around money, doesn't it? Let's imagine games had a larger impact on our behaviour than we would like to admit. Now, being South African, we grow up thinking differently to kids that don't play games and not because of obvious reasons, but because of this 'other' hidden culture the game developers are exposing us to. This could very well be a step towards globalisation and destroy certain racial barriers. So, games could be bringing the world together one cute bunny at a time."

*I think that games, like movies, influence culture and do help people understand other parts of the world – in some cases. But then again, we're all still killing Nazis and Russians and they're from up at the top of the map. And that country has the West and East bits divided by some Great China wall. And let's not even get into killing Africans in Africa. Games do teach but not always the right lessons. Ed.*

**FROM:** Shaun

**SUBJECT:** Major error in review

**"IN THE OCTOBER ISSUE** of NAG, as I was reading the review of Wolfenstein, I came across something unimaginable – a major mistake. In a review the Editor wrote himself. The mistake I am referring to is

## NAG Fan artwork

This is the best of what we received during the month. If you can insert, use or create a piece of gaming artwork incorporating the NAG logo, you might also end up here for your three lines of fame. This entry wins a NAGt-shirt!



**Hubert Knoblauch:** "All modelling on the NAG SCUD missile launcher was done in 3D Studio. I used a simple Daylight System For lighting. Rendering was done with the Mental ray renderer."

that the reviewer mentioned a collectable item, which he called 'Tombs of power'. It is, in fact, Tomes of power. How you could have got it so wrong is still a mystery to me. Anyway, NAG is still the best magazine ever, and I will continue reading it until the end of eternity, no matter how many tombs of power there are.

*Well, um, it was the designers – the fools. Okay, I can't lie like this. Yes, I screwed that one up royally. The problem is that I kept referring to them in office discussions as tombs of power: the word tomes just sounded wrong, so it was tombs this and tombs that, and did you find the tomb here and what about the tomb there? I had tombs on the brain, and I guess the last laugh is on me now. Ed.*

See what we have to deal with? AD.

**FROM:** Not really sure

**SUBJECT:** How?

**"I'M 13 YEARS OLD** and started to read your magazines about 1 year ago. I read and read and something quite awkward happened... I realised that your reviews tend to persuade me somehow... I mean you use phrases like 'a slice of cool in a cake of awesome' and stuff like that, which makes it hard not to like the game. My point is that I hated Plants vs. Zombies – until you reviewed it and gave it 90 out of 100. I took a closer look and loved the game! I hated Dead Space until you gave it 97 out of 100. Now it is my favourite game! Your arguments are quite good and always make me depend on your awesome or bad opinion... How do you do that?"

*Well, we're all extremely awesome, so everything we say and do and write resonates with pure military-grade awesome. This is what you're 'picking up' when you read NAG. It's fairly common, so don't be alarmed. Ed. NAG*

## On The Forums

**QUESTION:** Do your religious and moral beliefs affect your gaming?

**Kharrak:** "In terms of moral beliefs, I suppose so; though, not in an inhibiting manner. If a game's story or characters promote a moral concept that I disagree with, then it may irritate me or lead me to dislike a character or story aspect, but it's never gotten to the point where I actually cannot participate in the game at all."

**Adeptus:** "While I can condone wanton violence as a form of an age-old blood sport, I still feel that some blasphemous images and gameplay make me feel uneasy, and in some cases I stopped playing [Doom 3 for example]."

**Mikit0707:** "Absolutely not. If they did, then my gaming life probably would have begun and ended with Tetris. Hijacking cars, using prostitutes and shooting enough digital people to make my gaming actions border on genocide are certainly not moral or religious convictions that I adhere to in real life."

**vii:** "I think they inadvertently do. For instance, in RPGs I tend to follow the good story... When I replay the game to play evil, it's sometimes really hard to do the evil things. Other than that, I much more prefer to play a game that's portrayed realistically than politically and morally correct. If they swear and rape in prison, then I feel like I'm being cheated if they don't portray that in the game itself. Gaming is all about adopting the persona of someone else and living (in the game) like they do; not forcing your morals into a situation where they don't fit the back-story/motivation of the character you're playing."

**echo:** "Religion no, Moral beliefs yes. Gaming isn't real, so Religion won't have any impact, but I also usually try to be super good, which is because of my morals."

**Azraphael:** "As I am against religion, I wouldn't play a game that has religious undertones or uses real-world religions to drive the story. As for morals, I do enjoy taking the evil path, as it is the opposite of how I live my life. Games are meant to be about fantasy and letting you experience things that you normally wouldn't do."

**Uranium238:** "Not really. My moral values would kick in when a game takes certain aspects a bit too far (for example, a game that centres around raping people, etc.) or if the game directly discriminates against other races, and so forth."

**Spindleshanks:** "I think one of the reasons people play games is to subconsciously get away from their strict moral obligations toward their various religions and explore the 'what if factor' without necessarily engaging in them in real life. So no, neither affects me when I play games."

**FEN1X:** "It depends on the game... There's always a line to cross, and 99% of games don't cross it. But a game that simulates a rape... IMO that's going too far. (But then killing is okay? :p)"

**FaNb0y:** "To a certain extent, religion and morality do play a role in the games I play. I definitely won't be picking up Dante's Inferno, and I can't say I like the idea of ripping off someone's head in GoW III, but I don't have a problem with other violent games."

**Demikid:** "No, because no game will ever be insulting to a religion. The public outcry would be incredible. Besides, I can't be evil – it's too hard"

**lolioioio:** "No, I simply don't let it affect me. I have the ability to tell right from wrong, reality from fantasy. However, when I was still under my parents' roof, there were many games I wasn't allowed to play, purely because of their religious beliefs."

**Gh0st\_828:** "Not at all. If it's a decent game, I'll play it, no matter how many times someone shouts, 'nuke gay whales for Jesus!'"

**Have your say on the NAG forums:**  
<http://forums.tidemia.co.za/nag/>



# THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH

www.mede8er.com



Ergonomic Remote

**MKV** **DIVX** **AVCHD** **MP3** **xvid** **HDJPG** **TS** **OGG VORBIS**  
**DOLBY DIGITAL** **MPEG** **AVI** **AAC** **m2ts** **MP4** **H264** **flac** **dts**



Movies



Pictures



Music



Internet Radio

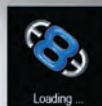


SD Card  
Camera Card Support

Modern GUI



File Manager



Internet Radio



Play just about everything... on your TV

The MED500X is the latest generation Multimedia Player specially developed by Sanji for today's demanding media enthusiast. The Mede8er has been designed for good solid media playback from a Hard Drive, USB device, SD Card, Internet or Local Network source. The User Interface is neat and intuitive without being complicated. Sanji have more than achieved its design goals of offering a media player that supports most of the popular media formats at a very affordable price.

The Mede8er fully supports the very latest MKV-H264 codec that achieves an incredible compression



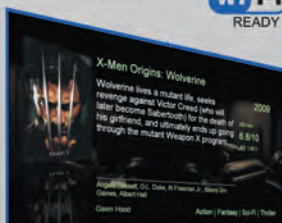
Supports HD Camcorder Files

UP TO  
**2TB**  
HARD DRIVE

**LIVE**  
INTERNET  
RADIO

**Wi-Fi**  
READY

**2 YEAR**  
WARRANTY



In Folder Preview Feature

**MED500X**  
High Definition Multimedia Player

**MEDE8ER**





# What's in your head?

A few important updates for two important zombie games

**IT SEEMS THAT UPCOMING** zombie survival shooter *Left 4 Dead 2* has been having some issues close to its release. Not entirely surprisingly, the Australian Office of Film and Literature Classification has once again swooped in and effectively banned the game by refusing to classify it. As does tend to happen, the OFLC cannot squeeze the game's gory content into its maximum rating of 15+, which means the game gets no rating – which means stores cannot sell the game. It's a little odd, considering that the first *Left 4 Dead* didn't have this same trouble, but Valve has been quick on the ball with a two-pronged retaliation. First, they appealed the decision, which was promptly shot down by those in charge. Not to be deterred, Valve has now decided that it's better to edit the game than fight the system.

Valve's Gabe Newell comments on the situation. "We think *Left 4 Dead 2* is a lot of fun. It's a game for adults. But we're aware that different countries have different restrictions, and we want to make the choices that make the game the most fun for that country."

In other *Left 4 Dead 2* news, a new game mode has recently been announced. Entitled Scavenge Mode, it will pit the regular four survivors against a horde of infected (with a few special infected mixed in for fun), but with a very different objective: to scavenge as many

of the 16 petrol canisters scattered around the level as possible. For each canister the survivors find and dump into a central generator, another 20 seconds is added to the clock. The new game mode is designed to add "quicker, even more frantic gameplay" to the already insane line-up of modes.

The previously Xbox-exclusive *Dead Rising 2* has also had an important announcement. While multiplayer has long been suspected to find its way into the game, it has now been confirmed by Capcom at recent Tokyo event. Their own words say it best:

"*Terror is Reality* is the TV show that has American audiences glued to their seats, as they watch four members of the public compete in a series of zombie killing challenges; *Dead Rising 2*'s Chuck Greene is one such contestant. *Dead Rising 2* allows up to four players to go head to head online in their very own *Terror is Reality* event to determine who is the ultimate zombie slayer."



## Gouranga!

Zombie games are all the rage these days. It seems that every genre is getting the undead treatment, from management games, to first-person shooters, to *Geometry Wars*-inspired top-down shooters. Now, it's the top-down driving genre's turn. *Zombie Driver* is an upcoming PC-only (at this point) title from developers EXOR Studios, the team behind the 2008 vehicle deathmatch title *Die in Pain, Rest in Peace (DIPRIIP)*. *Zombie Driver* is being developed alongside *DIPRIIP*, as the title has reportedly been taking a little longer to complete than they were hoping. So, to help ease the financial burden of development, they've managed to squeeze out *Zombie Driver*; but from the trailer, it looks to be more entertaining than the game it's supposedly backing.

*Zombie Driver* will see the player take to the streets in six different vehicles as they hunt down the brain-munching masses across 17 story missions. Each vehicle will feature nine different weapon upgrades, including machine guns, flame throwers, rocket launchers and dual railguns, and each weapon will have three upgrade levels. Like *DIPRIIP*, *Zombie Driver* will use the open-source combination of Ogre 3D and NVIDIA PhysX, but will not (currently) feature any multiplayer action; which we think is pity. The game is due out in November, most likely on Steam. Check out [www.zombiedriver.com](http://www.zombiedriver.com) for more details, and the debut trailer.



## Death Rally remake on its way?

Some of you may remember the 1996 shooter/racer known as *Death Rally*. Originally published by Apogee, *Death Rally* was developed by Remedy Entertainment, which later went on to develop the *Max Payne* series, as well as the upcoming *Alan Wake*. Now, Remedy has filed an updated trademark for the brand, giving strong indications that we can look forward to a remake in the future. The supposed competitor to *Death Rally*, *Deathtrack*, has already seen its remake – *Deathtrack Resurrection*. While *Resurrection* performed poorly, a remake of *Death Rally* has plenty of potential; it's not often that a developer will revisit an existing IP some 13 years later, without having learnt a trick or two in the interim.



JONI  
HOSTESS  
THE BALLAD OF GAY TONY

# grand theft auto

Episodes From  
Liberty City

TWO COMPLETE GAMES THE BALLAD OF GAY TONY AND THE LOST AND DAMNED

18  
www.pegi.info

ONLY ON  
XBOX 360

OUT NOW

[www.rockstargames.com/episodesfromlibertycity](http://www.rockstargames.com/episodesfromlibertycity)

XBOX  
LIVE



© 2006-2009 Rockstar Games, Inc. Rockstar Games, Grand Theft Auto, Episodes from Liberty City, the R logo, the Grand Theft Auto logo and the Episodes from Liberty City logo are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Take-Two Interactive Software. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies. All other marks and trademarks are properties of their respective owners. All rights reserved.

Jump in.

 XBOX 360.



11 10 09  
 WWW.MODERNWARFARE2.COM  
 20? 22? 24? 2010?

# Delays, delays, delays

Is it time to buy a console yet?

**O**H, WOE IS THE poor PC gamer! The world hates you, this much is clear, but now Activision and Ubisoft are getting ready to fling a few stones of their own.

First up – big news: *Modern Warfare 2* has been delayed for all PC releases. Not that you were getting any special editions in this country anyway, but at least you know your fate is shared with everyone overseas. While the game was originally due out on the 10<sup>th</sup> of November for PC, Xbox 360 and PS3, it's now just the consoles that will be seeing their releases on that date. Now comes the tricky bit – exactly when the PC will see its share of the action. The majority of rumours floating around agree that it will be on shelves on the 24<sup>th</sup> – a mere two weeks later – but there are a gloomy few who only expect the title to only be released in December. We've managed to dig a little deeper into the rumour mill, and have strong suspicions that you'll see the game on shelves between the 20<sup>th</sup> and the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Unfortunately, Activision has been even less forthcoming with the reasoning behind the delays. As the two release dates are so close together, we can only assume that it's a logistical issue, or perhaps some last-minute driver problems. Oh, we've got another surprise for PC players: you can expect the retail price for *Modern Warfare 2* to be around the R499 mark.

If that wasn't enough, then perhaps the news of *Assassin's Creed II*'s delay will shake you up a bit. The PC release, which was also expected to launch alongside its console counterparts, is only going to see the light of day in Q1 2010. According to Ubisoft, this delay has nothing to do with development issues, and is rather purely a sales issue – which at least earns them credit for honesty. The Xbox 360 and PS3 releases are still on schedule, and should be on shelves here on the 20<sup>th</sup> of November. Obviously, this year's holiday release list is looking pretty good, but things are starting to thin out as all the titles continue to make room for each other.



## ROCK EVERYWHERE YOU GO

Maybe we missed this revolution: You know, the one where people standing in a long bank queue, twiddling away at their mobile phones in the hopes of staving off the boredom, suddenly break out into song and dance, while a select few hammer away at some power chords, and another smashes at a drum kit. It's obviously a strange world that we live in, because EA Mobile has officially announced that *Rock Band* is coming to the iPhone and iPod Touch platforms.

Up to four players will be able to jam together in the 20 songs included in the core release of the game (which means that there will be extra downloadable content). Songs that will come with the release of the game include *Attack by 30 Seconds to Mars*, *Sabotage* by the Beastie Boys, Foo Fighters' *Everlong*, and *Cherub Rock* by Smashing Pumpkins. Players will be able to play co-op or head-to-head over Bluetooth.





TONY PRINCE  
NIGHTCLUB IMPRESARIO  
THE BALLAD OF GAY TONY



# grand theft auto

Episodes From  
Liberty City

TWO COMPLETE GAMES THE BALLAD OF GAY TONY AND THE LOST AND DAMNED

18  
www.pegi.info

ONLY ON  
XBOX 360

OUT NOW

[www.rockstargames.com/episodesfromlibertycity](http://www.rockstargames.com/episodesfromlibertycity)

XBOX  
LIVE



© 2006-2009 Rockstar Games, Inc. Rockstar Games, Grand Theft Auto, Episodes from Liberty City, the R logo, the Grand Theft Auto logo and the Episodes from Liberty City logo are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Take-Two Interactive Software. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies. All other marks and trademarks are properties of their respective owners. All rights reserved.

Jump in.

 XBOX 360.

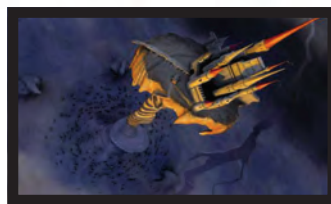




## Mickey goes epic

**RUMOURS HAVE BEEN DOING** the rounds for some time now, but now the existence of Warren Spector's new title has finally been confirmed. Spector, whose name you may recognise from the development of *Dues Ex* and the *Thief* series, founded Junction Point Studios back in 2005, from the remains of Ion Storm Austin. Then, in 2007, Junction Point was bought out by Disney Interactive Studios. The reason for that buyout has now been made clear – *Epic Mickey*.

While few solid details exist at this stage, we know from the concept art that *Epic Mickey* is a Disney-themed platformer set in a twisted, dystopian steampunk universe. The imagery we've caught sight of so far depicts a massive steam-powered Epcot Centre dreadnought, a mechanical Goofy, and Cinderella's Castle high atop a perilous spire of twisted rock. The gameplay is said to revolve around Mickey as the main playable character; he'll have to paint and erase the levels he travels through, while the rest of the Disney cast attempts to dethrone the Mouse. There's no release date worth mentioning yet, but we do know that *Epic Mickey* is in development for the Wii; no other platforms have been confirmed at this time.



### IT'S SO BIG!

Studio Ghibli, the team behind anime films *Spirited Away*, *Howl's Moving Castle* and *Ponyo on the Cliff by the Sea*, makes big films. It'd be expected then, that their recent collaboration with Studio 5, the developers of the *Professor Layton* series of DS games, would result in a big game. Nobody expected it would be this big, however. *Ninokuni* (or *Another World*) currently has a projected size that's way over the norm of DS games, and will require a special high-density 4GB flash card (that's more than twice the size of a UMD) to fit everything in. "Everything", in this case, includes a fully orchestrated score by none other than Joe Hisaishi, the musical genius behind Studio Ghibli's films. There will also be tons of full-motion video created by the film studio, to accompany this classic-style JRPG, as well as a huge game world with loads of content.



## Keeping it real

Retro gaming is cool, right? You know, when you break out that crappy *Golden China* NES clone, dust off a copy of your favourite version of *999 games in 1*, and pop that bad boy into the machine while you struggle with the eject mechanism? If you have no idea what we're referring to, rest assured... we do, and retro gaming is cool. There is a rather strange side to the retro gaming scene, however, indicated by current developers making new games that run on old systems. The game in question here is called *Rush Rush Rally Racing*, and the platform in question? The SEGA Dreamcast.

To celebrate the console's ten-year anniversary, Japan-based developer Redspotgames has travelled back in time, possibly a bit further than ten years, to bring us this top-down rally racer. It's all about the old school, with the trailer proudly proclaiming that the game features "No realistic backgrounds. No sponsored cars. Only fun, retro gameplay." The game looks okay, but we've seen better-looking titles hit the market some years before that. The gameplay seems pretty standard, but at least it supports four-player split-screen, which is more than we can say for most other modern racing titles. If this is the kind of thing that totally presses your buttons, pay [www.redspotgames.com](http://www.redspotgames.com) a visit and buy this game for only \$22 (R160). Alternatively, go to that next level of extreme Dreamcast madness, and lay down \$42 for the deluxe edition, which includes a soundtrack CD, full colour manual, deleted scenes (of what, we can't imagine) and even some stickers for your trouble.

## It's not easy being green

**"TETRIS MEETS CITY-BUILDING"** – just roll that around in your head for a while. If it doesn't make any sense to you, don't panic; you're not alone. It's the premise behind a new indie game called *City Rain*, by developer Ovolo Corporation, in which players are tasked with turning a polluting, dirty city into a green-friendly metropolis. All of the usual city management issues exist – such as education, health, safety, employment, and sustainability – but it's not always up to the player to choose which buildings they'll put down in each turn.

As buildings fall from the sky, you can rotate between options, and occasionally have to find a

place to dump the trash when it comes tumbling down. Believe it or not, the game actually works incredibly well, and manages to bring across the green message while it's at it. Players will need to deal with waste management, energy production, deforestation and other environmental issues as they attempt to build up their cities. There are plenty of surprises and extra features to keep the game interesting, from what we've seen so far. There is currently a PC demo available online at [www.ovologames.com](http://www.ovologames.com), and the developers are also expecting to make the move over to the XBLA platform soon, as well as "other casual game platforms".







## Finish him!

While companies like Microsoft, Sony and Nintendo are striving to make videogames more accessible and easy to play with "natural" approaches to controllers, Yale School of Music graduates David Hindman and Evan Drummond have decided to take a route that's completely the opposite. These two have developed a system whereby player input is no longer determined by button presses on a controller, but particular notes and chords played on a real electric acoustic guitar.

The duo has been working on this system for over a year, and managed to get it up and running on three games: *Pong*, *Mario Kart* and *Mortal Kombat III*. Seeing it in action is a little bizarre, to say the least, as the two battle it out with face-melting solos for attack combos. It is rather impressive, however, as they manage to perform special attacks and even a fatality. If you've got the bandwidth to spare and want to see it for yourself, head over to YouTube and search for 'Modal Kombat'.

## Visceral rips Jack

If you're one of those crazy people who go around thinking that psychopathic serial killers are misunderstood and under-represented by the mainstream gaming industry, then we suppose we've got some good news for you. Visceral Games, the studio behind *Dead Space* and the upcoming *Dante's Inferno*, is said to be running the show behind a re-imagining of the classic story of Jack the Ripper.

According to sources, this version of London's famous murderer is doing it all for good. Instead of running around and disemboweling prostitutes in the middle of the night, Visceral's Jack will be battling demons, vampires and other monsters, as some sort of slayer of all things evil. Jack will reportedly have access to a number of bizarre and varied weapons, as well as, wait for it... the ability to slow down time.

Much of this is just from "a source", and should be taken with a pinch of salt until the official work follows suit.

## They said it...

"The goal that I had in bringing a lot of the packaged goods folks [sic] into Activision about 10 years ago, **was to take all the fun out of making video games.**"

Bobby Kotick, Activision CEO

"I love Valve games, and I do business with the company. But, I'm just saying, **Steam isn't the answer. Steam helps us as customers, but it's also a money grab**, and Valve is exploiting a lot of people in a way that's not totally fair."

Randy Pitchford, President of Gearbox Software

"Honestly, *Crystal Bearer's* graphics were harsh. **There's nothing you can do about it, because that's the limit of the hardware.**"

Taro Yoko, developer on Square Enix and Cavia's upcoming *Nier*

"Activision did not want *Modern Warfare*. **They thought working on a modern game was risky and 'Oh my God you can't do that, it's crazy!'** They were doing market research to show us we were wrong the whole time."

Vince Zampella, CEO of Infinity Ward

# XGR

## Discover the Difference



Comfort



PS/2



Waterproof Design

## Gaming Desktop

Enjoy gaming-grade performance and super accuracy. This five star waterproof design makes the keyboard entirely waterproof for easy cleaning. The advanced optical technology mouse provides quick response speed and unprecedented control performance.



USB



Video



Music



Digital Wireless

## Cordless Keyboard and Mouse

Innovative wave design cradles your hand for keyboard and mouse. Go longer with a low-battery light and auto-off mouse features.

Distributed by



www.comstarsa.co.za







# Nadeo finds a new home

**N**ADEO'S *TRACKMANIA* SERIES IS arguably the most popular user-generated racing title around. Over 15 million user-built tracks are scattered across thousands of servers worldwide, with up to 64 players (out of a total of 10 million registered users) competing simultaneously to nab the highest score on each track. Now, French mega-publisher Ubisoft has decided that they want in on the action, and has bought out Nadeo, along with all of its *TrackMania* IP.

"We are excited about the idea of introducing *TrackMania* to an ever-wider audience and sharing the expertise of

Nadeo's teams with our Group's other developers," said Ubisoft head-honcho Yves Guillemot.

Nadeo clearly shares this excitement, according to CEO Florent Castelnérac. "Nadeo's team was keen for this acquisition to happen," he said. "Like players in a community, we see ourselves as being a complementary fit with Ubisoft and believe that we can share and quickly move ahead together."

In related news, Ubisoft has recently filed the trademark for a new *Prince of Persia* game, called *Prince of Persia: The Forgotten Sands*. Unfortunately, no other details are available at this stage.

## THAT MAN REGGIE

Reggie Fils-Aime, the president of Nintendo of America, recently had a lot to say. That's not unusual. In an interview with the *Washington Post*, he started out by questioning the release of Sony's PSPgo, describing the concept of the device as problematic. "I have the utmost respect for all our competitors," he said. "But it's interesting to try and answer the consumer question of 'what's in it for me?' in that product." Aside from mentioning the fact that the Wii launch was handled just right, he also pointed out that Nintendo has no interest in playing in the mobile phone space, despite the iPhone's undeniable success as a gaming device. "We don't have a desire to get into the phone space," he concluded. "We think the game business is competitive enough."

## Oh Wii, what are you doing?

We'll admit, there are a couple of rather handy Wii peripherals out there. The steering wheel and gun attachments spring to mind. On the other hand, however, you have the ton of just plain, daft-looking attachments. Further attempting to reinforce the Wii's image as an exercise machine, sporting equipment manufacturer Everlast has now jumped into the fray. Wii Weights is a 2-pound dumbbell set for the Wii that lets you add weight to each remote as a "great way to add a strength element to any aerobic workout." It's also a great way to look ridiculous while you're slaughtering countless hordes in *House of the Dead*.

When you're done adding strength elements to *Super Mario Galaxy*, and now crave an added cardio element to your favourite racing game, the Cyberbike should be exactly what you're after. It's a full-size exercise back that is designed for use with *Mario Kart* in particular, which publisher Big Ben Interactive claims is a "genuine innovation" in the gaming industry. It will have an adjustable saddle and handlebars, although there's no

mention of vitals tracking. The Cyberbike will be released early in 2010; if you can't wait until then, Big Ben's *My Body Coach* should help you through the Christmas holidays, with its own dumbbell set.



## The Getaway 3 on hold for a while

Sony knows what you want for Christmas, and it's not *The Getaway 3*. Despite the fact that the title has been in development for years, the game, along with *Eight Days*, has been put on hold while SCEE tinkers away at more important (read: lucrative) titles to fill your holiday wishlists.

"I would not say they were abandoned, just put aside. Much work had been done," states SCEE's Nicolas Doucet. "The studio just wanted to focus on its strengths: *EyeToy* and *SingStar*. Given the potential of *EyePet*, priorities have been changed, but it is not a 'death' of other projects. Ultimately, this decision has benefited everyone."







## Evolution of THE ROLE-PLAYING SHOOTER



1993: Shadow Caster



1994: System Shock



2000: Dues Ex



2004: Vampire: The Masquerade:  
Bloodlines



2007: Hellgate: London



2009: Borderlands



## Activision gives 7 Studios the snip

When it comes to business acquisitions and cut-backs, Activision doesn't mess around. In April, the publisher bought out 7 Studios – the developers behind *DJ Hero*'s competitor – *Scratch: The Ultimate DJ*. Rumours flew all over the place that they were simply buying out the competition to give *DJ Hero* a wider berth during the upcoming Christmas release period (which *DJ Hero* shared with *Scratch*, at the time). Activision, of course, denied the rumours, but then, in August, moved the development of the game over to a studio called Commotion Interactive, with a new, post-2009 release date. At the time, Activision claimed that the buy-out's purpose was to "bolster its development capabilities," and that it "provided the fledgling developer with much needed financing during these difficult economic times."

With Commotion, *Scratch* will be given a visual makeover as well as a revised track-list. The controller will remain the same, and Commotion is only too happy to be given the extra development time. 7 Studios, on the other hand, continues to receive the raw end of this deal. Activision has now fired 30 employees from the company (estimated to be half of the total number).

"Since the completion of its acquisition by Activision, 7 Studios has realigned its business to focus its development resources on the music genre. As a part of this realignment, the studio is reducing its workforce to better reflect Activision's upcoming slate of music-based games," an Activision rep revealed.

## Activision axes Shaba Studios

If you absolutely adored *Spider-Man: Web of Shadows*, and eagerly await more from the developer, you're out of luck. Publisher Activision has officially closed the developers, Shaba Studios. The San Francisco-based studio, which was also responsible for a few ports in the *Tony Hawk* series, has now been brought to the end of its 12-year existence because it wasn't measuring up to Activision's overall strategy. An Activision rep comments: "Activision continually evaluates the resources at our studio properties to ensure that they are properly matched to our product slate and overall strategic goals. As part of this process, we recently made the difficult but necessary decision to close Shaba Studios. We are grateful for the studio's contributions and wish this talented team success in their future endeavors."



Discover the Difference



## 2.4GHz Gaming Wireless Mouse

Have style and comfort in your palm. This mouse has three levels of speed change without drive. It is free moving within 10m. 1000-1600 adjustable dpi. Power on/off button for long battery life. Customizable side buttons.



## Mini Laptop Mouse

Enjoy a mouse with a stylish appearance, glossy finish and superior navigation technology. By using the latest in optical technology, this mouse delivers more accuracy and control on most surfaces than ever before. Retractable rubber band line.

Distributed by



www.comstarsa.co.za







## More Natal details emerge (sort of)

**D**ETAILS ABOUT MICROSOFT'S HIGHLY anticipated upcoming motion controller are finally starting to arrive, including a few vague hints at the pricing we can expect. During a recent US press event, Microsoft executive Robbie Bach told reporters that they can expect Natal to be priced "like anything else," which we're taking to mean "expensive". NAG's completely wild guess: R2,000, but don't quote us on that. Bach explained that Natal will have a price curve similar to everything else, as well, which means it'll start out on the higher end of affordability and eventually drop as time goes on.

Bach continued to say many words without actually saying anything. When asked by a reporter as to when we can all stop calling it by its codename, Natal. His response? "When we tell you to call it something else." Ouch.

### EPIC NERD RAGE

As much as stories like this make our blackened little hearts weep tiny tears, it's always pleasing to know that one isn't the craziest gamer on this planet. Well, unless you've recently stabbed someone is a fit of lag-induced nerd rage.

Such is the story of an unnamed 18-year-old Swede who had a little bit of a temper tantrum when he was dropped from an online game of *StarCraft* one late Saturday night. After subsequent attempts to rejoin the warfare, the man gave up and stormed outside in a fit of rage, carrying a kitchen knife. It was there that he encountered a jovial 15-year-old girl and her friend, having a lovely walk home after an evening's partying, and proceeded to attack the girl with the knife. The stab wounds were, thankfully, not life-threatening, and the 18-year-old has been tried for attempted murder. The court eventually settled on attempted manslaughter, as the chap was clearly a nutter.



## U2 to break into the gaming industry?

When the music industry isn't complaining about how much music games are ruining kids' ambitions to become real rock stars, they're frantically trying to hack their way into the gaming scene. Oh the irony. Irish pop-rockers U2 are the latest musicians to cotton on to the idea. In a recent interview with magazine *USA Today*, bassist Adam Clayton tells all:

"We definitely would like to be in there, but we felt some of the compromises weren't what we wanted. That could change. I love the idea that that's where people are getting music, and we'd love to be in that world. We'll figure something out. What The Beatles have done, where the animation is much more representative of them, is what we're interested in, rather than the one-size-fits-all animation. We didn't want to be caricatured."

Does that mean we'll soon see U2: *Rock Band*? We're not sure, but this is the first public mention we've seen where the band has actively expressed interest in the industry. We just hope that they don't make the same mistake that poor confused Courtney Love recently made, when she signed away the rights to use Kurt Cobain's likeness in *GH5*, without realising the full extent of the contract.



## The Great Firewall of China

If you're an MMORPG fan, then China is not a good place for you to be. That country's General Administration of Press and Publication (GAPP) has once again tightened the restrictions placed on online gaming, in an effort to curb 'game addiction'.

A new notice issued by the GAPP says that online games must be pre-approved and must get an Internet Publishing License before they are released. Further, foreign investors in Chinese videogame development companies will be prohibited from being involved as sole owners, Joint venture partners or cooperative partners – that means foreign investors will not be involved in the operation of MMORPG games in China at all... at least not ones

made in China.

A recent survey performed by GAPP, investigating 200 online games, found numerous games that did not conform to publishing procedures, did not have fatigue testing capabilities and some had even added 'unhealthy' content after approval.

This latest statement is yet another step in the isolation of Chinese gamers by their government. Other steps have included three-hour play restrictions and a tightening of restrictions on foreign games, to "avoid the excessive penetration of foreign culture among Chinese youth". Who would have thought the new Great Wall of China was going to be an electronic one?



## Gaming Charts

**Look & Listen**  
DVD • CD • GAMES • MP3 • ACCESSORIES

LOOK & LISTEN RECOMMENDS...

### PLAYSTATION 3

- 1 Uncharted 2: Among Thieves
- 2 Assassin's Creed II
- 3 FIFA 10
- 4 Tekken 6
- 5 inFAMOUS Platinum

### XBOX 360

- 1 Grand Theft Auto: Episodes From Liberty City
- 2 Halo 3: ODST
- 3 Forza Motorsport 3
- 4 James Cameron's Avatar: The Game
- 5 Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2

### PLAYSTATION 2

- 1 FIFA 10
- 2 WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2010
- 3 Bakugan
- 4 DJ Hero Bundle
- 5 Guitar Hero 5 Bundle

### PC

- 1 Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2
- 2 The Sims 3: World Adventures
- 3 Dragon Age: Origins
- 4 CSI 5
- 5 Resident Evil 5

### PSP

- 1 Grand Theft Auto: Chinatown Wars
- 2 Gran Turismo
- 3 Jak and Daxter: The Lost Frontier
- 4 LittleBigPlanet
- 5 Cars Race-O-Rama

### WII

- 1 Wii Fit Plus
- 2 New Super Mario Bros.
- 3 Rapala: We Fish Bundle
- 4 Need for Speed: Nitro
- 5 Rabbids Go Home

### DS

- 1 Mario & Sonic at the Winter Olympic Games
- 2 Pokémon Platinum
- 3 Disney Fairies: Tinker Bell and the Lost Treasure
- 4 Madagascar: Mad Karts
- 5 SimAnimals Africa



August 2009 figures provided by GfK  
www.gfksa.co.za

### PLAYSTATION 3

- 1 Ashes Cricket 2009
- 2 Resistance: Fall of Man
- 3 MotorStorm
- 4 Madden NFL 10
- 5 FIFA 09

### XBOX 360

- 1 Madden NFL 10
- 2 Kung Fu Panda
- 3 LEGO Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures
- 4 Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare
- 5 Command & Conquer 3: Tiberium Wars

### PLAYSTATION 2

- 1 FIFA 09
- 2 Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen
- 3 Rugby 08
- 4 Transformers: The Game
- 5 Grand Theft Auto: Vice City

### PC

- 1 The Sims 3
- 2 Need for Speed: Underground 2
- 3 Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas
- 4 CSI: 3 Dimensions of Murder
- 5 Command & Conquer 3: Tiberium Wars

### PSP

- 1 Burnout Legends
- 2 Need for Speed: Undercover
- 3 Grand Theft Auto: Vice City
- 4 Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories
- 5 Transformers: The Game

### WII

- 1 Wii Sports Resort + MotionPlus
- 2 Wii Sports
- 3 Wii Fit + Balance Board
- 4 Tiger Woods PGA Tour 10
- 5 EA Sports Active

### DS

- 1 Brain Age 2: More Training in Minutes a Day
- 2 Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs
- 3 New Super Mario Bros.
- 4 G-Force
- 5 Ben 10: Protector of Earth

## Gooooooooooooooooo!!!!

Do you remember the local game development studio I-Imagine Interactive? They were responsible for one of the original Xbox Incubation titles, *Chase: Hollywood Stunt Driver*, as well as a couple of other games that you probably haven't heard of. Never mind, young one, because now, after a long hibernation, a ton of business worries and too many years, they've released another game. It's called *Football Genius - The Ultimate Quiz*, and it's available right now on Xbox LIVE Arcade for 800 MS Points. The game features over 3,500 trivia questions and visual puzzles, nine game



modes and multiplayer support for up to four players. It also has support for the Scene It? Big Button Controller. While it may not be a huge, AAA block-busting bonanza, *Football Genius* will act as a (re-) launch pad for I-Imagine. That means one thing: if you want to see more from these fine folks, it's time to spend some money; \$10 is hardly going to break the bank.

# Blu-ray

## For the Fans

Many more titles available in store  
and at [www.lookandlisten.co.za](http://www.lookandlisten.co.za)



R299<sup>99</sup>

Shaun Of The Dead  
Available from  
the 9<sup>th</sup> November



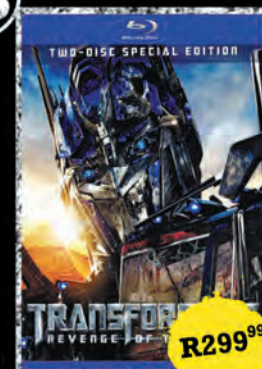
R299<sup>99</sup>

Snatch  
Available from  
the 2<sup>nd</sup> November



R299<sup>99</sup>

Star Trek  
(2 DVD)  
Available from  
the 16<sup>th</sup> November



R299<sup>99</sup>

Transformers  
Revenge Of The Fallen  
(2 DVD)  
Available from  
the 16<sup>th</sup> November



R299<sup>99</sup>

Waterworld  
Available from  
the 9<sup>th</sup> November



R379<sup>99</sup>

Terminator  
Salvation  
Steel Book  
Available from  
the 2<sup>nd</sup> November

**Look & Listen**  
For the Fans

NAG's preferred DVD retailer.

DVD • CD • GAMES • MP3 • ACCESSORIES

For product information contact us on: 011 467 3717  
or shop online at [www.lookandlisten.co.za](http://www.lookandlisten.co.za)

While stocks last. E&OE. Prices and availability subject to  
change at the discretion of the supplier.

**Look & Listen**  
For the Fans





## The age of cheeky DLC

**H**ERE AT NAG, WE enjoy extra downloadable content for games. Whether it's paid-for or free content, it's always nice to have the option to expand your game with more stuff, when you've completed it. It also decreases time between releases, as developers can push out a DLC pack on a short, regular basis instead of waiting a full year for an expansion, or longer for an entire sequel, before you see new content. It might come as a bit of a surprise, or rather, a bit of a cheek, to find that there will be premium DLC available for *Dragon Age: Origins* on the day of its release.

Entitled *The Warden's Keep*, this pack will introduce the character to a "new" environment, complete with "new" weapons, "new" armour and "new" spells. You know, because the "old" weapons, spells and armour were getting so boring. The content will be on sale for 560 MS points on XBL, or \$7 (R55) for the PS3 and PC releases. Additionally, another DLC pack called *The Stone Prisoner* will be available at no cost for all pre-order buyers. For everyone else, you'll have to cough up \$15 (R110) on top of the full price you just paid for the game.

## What Batman could have been

According to the folks over at Game Informer, who recently sat down for a chat with *Batman: Arkham Asylum* developers Rocksteady Studios, Batman was "this" close to ending up as a rhythm game. \*Shudder\*

A few interesting facts were learnt from the interview, such as "For some of the motion-capture scenes of Harley Quinn, we actually use one of the male producers," and "The word 'Joker' is said 384 times in the game," but what really struck us is this:

"Combat went through three distinct revisions – the first one being a full rhythm action game! The second one was prototyped in 2D, which popped up whenever you got into a fight, and involved coloured circles bashing into each other. This actually formed the basis of the final system."



## DOTA DEV SIGNS UP WITH VALVE

Valve has once again jumped on the community-driven development train; this time they've hired the creator of *DotA: Allstars* – IceFrog. He'll reportedly be leading an entire team at Valve, working on a mystery project. It's not clear at this stage what this move means for *DotA*, but he's assured people that there will still be at least two patches coming from him for the popular *Warcraft III* map. After that, it's likely that he'll hand development over to someone else and, we're assuming, continue working on something *DotA*-related (or at least, inspired) over at Valve. It's pretty clear, from recent titles, that the *DotA* craze is catching on, with new, standalone titles making some impact in the RTS world, including Impulse's *Demigod* and S2 Games' upcoming *Heroes of Newerth*. Whether or not this means we'll see Valve competing directly on this front, or making a move to enhance the genre and take it a step further, cannot be said at this stage.



## The Monitor vs The Badginator

If you're reading this, you're clearly into gaming. Which means that you're one of those people who want to see every graphic and every expression down to the last detail.

That's why we'd like to suggest that you get yourself a new Samsung LED monitor. Not only is it damn fine to look at (even when it's switched off), but it produces sharper images, richer colours and clarity that you've never experienced before.

What's probably just as important to you is finding the Badger in our magazine. Now we all know that since his unfortunate meeting with the truck carrying cybernetic body parts and his very fortunate meeting with an ambulance full of cybernetic doctors, our Badger now has a peg leg and eyepatch. But don't for a minute think his physical impairment has made him any easier to spot. In fact, after working on him for a few days, the doctors not only put him back together again, they made him advanced.

Unfortunately for him, though, even his new-found prowess was no match for the Samsung LED monitor he found himself on in our last issue. Its sharper images and extreme clarity made him easy to spot for our latest winner (Tertius Roscher) who walks away with a new LED monitor courtesy of Samsung.

FYI, the Badger is back to normal this month. Happy hunting.

## LAST MONTH'S WINNER

Tertius Roscher, p51





## Caption of the Month

Every month we'll choose a screenshot from any random game and write a bad caption for it. Your job is to come up with a better caption. The winner will get a game from Ster-Kinekor games. Send your captions to [ed@anag.co.za](mailto:ed@anag.co.za) with the subject line [November Caption].

### THIS MONTH'S CONTEST



**NAG'S LAME ATTEMPT AT HUMOUR:**  
"Insert fart joke here."

### LAST MONTH'S WINNER



**"You feeling lucky, pumpkin?"**  
– Peter Besekey

### AUGUST WINNER



**"No jokes, you really need a tic tac!!!"**  
– James Wilson

## Events

### MAGIC THE GATHERING

**NOVVA'S FRIDAY NIGHT MAGIC**  
**When:** Every Friday  
**Time:** 19:00  
**Type:** Standard, Constructed  
**Cost:** R30  
[novvagaming.co.za](http://novvagaming.co.za)

### LANs

**CS 1.6 COMP**  
**When:** 7 Nov  
**Where:** Benoni  
**Type:** Competition  
[langames.co.za](http://langames.co.za)

**CRYLAN**  
**When:** 7 Nov  
**Where:** Cape Town  
**Type:** Open LAN  
[langames.co.za](http://langames.co.za)

**NOVVA LAN**  
**When:** 14 Nov  
**Where:** Novva Gaming, JHB  
**Type:** Free-for-all  
[novvagaming.co.za](http://novvagaming.co.za)

**MAYHEM NOVEMBER**  
**When:** 14 Nov  
**Where:** Boksburg  
**Type:** Open LAN  
[langames.co.za](http://langames.co.za)

**AGGENEYS LAN**  
**When:** 27 Nov  
**Where:** Springbok  
**Type:** Open LAN  
[langames.co.za](http://langames.co.za)

**PLAIN FUN**  
**When:** 30 Nov  
**Where:** Nelspruit  
**Type:** Open LAN  
[langames.co.za](http://langames.co.za)

### YU-GI-OH!

**TOURNAMENTS**  
**When:** Saturdays  
**Time:** 10:00  
**Where:** Novva Gaming, JHB  
[novvagaming.co.za](http://novvagaming.co.za)

### HEROCLIX

Contact Novva Gaming for more information.  
[novvagaming.co.za](http://novvagaming.co.za)

## BL GAMES™ Release List

Release dates subject to change

### WEEK 1: NOVEMBER 1-7

| TITLE                                | PLATFORMS        |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| Dragon Ball Z: Attack of the Saiyans | DS               |
| Dragon Age: Origins                  | PC, 360          |
| Ghostbusters: The Video Game         | PC, 360, Wii, DS |
| Marvel: Ultimate Alliance 2          | PSP              |

### WEEK 2: NOVEMBER 8-14

| TITLE                                     | PLATFORMS          |
|---|--------------------|
| Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2            | 360, PS3           |
| Call of Duty: Modern Warfare: Mobilized   | DS                 |
| Jak and Daxter: The Lost Frontier         | PSP, PS2           |
| Buzz! Quiz World                          | PSP, PS3           |
| SingStar Take That                        | PS2, PS3           |
| SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs Fireteam Bravo 3   | PSP                |
| Raven Squad: Operation Hidden Dagger      | 360, PC            |
| Cars Race-O-Rama                          | PS3, 360, PS2, Wii |
| CSI 5                                     | Wii                |
| Dragon Ball: Raging Blast                 | PS3, 360           |
| Tales of Symphonia: Dawn of the New World | Wii                |
| Pro Evolution Soccer 2010                 | PSP                |
| Shaun White Snowboarding: World Stage     | Wii                |

### WEEK 3: NOVEMBER 15-21

| TITLE   | PLATFORMS              |
|---|------------------------|
| Left 4 Dead 2                                 | 360, PC                |
| Saw   | 360, PC, PS3           |
| LittleBigPlanet                               | PSP                    |
| World of Zoo                                  | Wii, DS, PC            |
| The Sims 3: World Adventures                  | PC                     |
| Assassin's Creed II                           | 360, PS3               |
| Assassin's Creed: Discovery                   | DS                     |
| Assassin's Creed: Bloodlines                  | PSP                    |
| LEGO Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues | PS3, 360, Wii, DS, PSP |
| Need for Speed: Nitro                         | DS                     |
| Dragon Age: Origins                           | PS3                    |

### WEEK 4: NOVEMBER 22-30

| TITLE                          | PLATFORMS          |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2 | PC                 |
| Rogue Warrior                  | PS3, 360, PC       |
| Tony Hawk: Ride                | 360, Wii, PS3      |
| DJ Hero                        | PS3, 360, Wii, PS2 |
| Band Hero                      | PS3, 360, Wii, PS2 |

Pre-Order for PC and receive  
2x exclusive in-game items :  
Guild Masters belt & Memory Band



## Collectors Edition (PC Only)



- TIN CASE
- BONUS DVD (MAKING OF DOCUMENTARY, SOUNDTRACK, TRAILERS, WALLPAPER, ART VIDEO, STRATEGY AND TIPS)
- CLOTH MAP
- 3 PIECES OF EXCLUSIVE IN-GAME CONTENT: BERGENS HONOR, GRIMOIRE OF THE FROZEN WASTES, AND FINAL REASON
- ADDITIONAL IN-GAME CONTENT — THE STONE PRISONER, AN UNLOCKABLE BONUS QUEST AND AN UNLOCKABLE CHARACTER, SHALE
- AN UNLOCKABLE ITEM FOR MASS EFFECT 2





# MIKTAR'S INCHDERINGS

BY MIKTAR DRACON

## Snakes and Ladders

**MUCH LIKE THE COMEDIC** horror of a train wreck that is the *Star Wars Holiday Special* (1978), just because you **can** do something, and **have** done something, doesn't mean you should, or should have. That's kind of how I feel about ranked online games. I don't think online game ranking should be done, nor do I think it should have been done – at least not automatically. Not yet, anyway.

People cheat in online games because wins/losses are recorded. I'm not saying that removing ranking would eliminate cheaters altogether – 'jerkwards' are 'jerkwards' in any situation – but much of the supporting elements that create a culture of cheating are for the sake of maintaining a high number in an arbitrary system. Remove the need to keep a win/loss record high, and the number of people who care enough about it drastically reduces.

Most of the time when playing online, you don't have to play ranked matches. Xbox LIVE, mercifully, has an overall support for Player Matches that remain devoid of any silly numbers recording your success and failure for all to see. Meanwhile, over in Ranked Match Land, the people who disconnect during a match to avoid having a loss marked on their oh-so-important score card, run rampant. The people who resort to any kind of cheats, hacks and 'router-wizardry' for the sake of their win count, continue to plague the console and PC online spheres like a bad case of genital warts.

It wasn't always like this, you know. Perhaps it's showing my age, but back when the only way to play a game on the Internet was stuff like Dwango or Kali, before wins/losses were in any way automatically recorded and you had to submit your scores to sites like Case's Ladder, there was generally far less of the "win at any cost" attitude that's so prevalent today.

Incidentally, did you know that it has recently been discovered that females in the animal kingdom don't always pick the most testosterone-laden males as potential mates? Seems the **social** dynamic in nature is actually far more complex than just "beef = better daddy = better offspring". Through research, it was discovered that in nature, the females are far more "group" conscious than was initially believed, and will actually pick males that are more gentle, that share, and that show good habits for having a **larger** pack or flock. The bigger, healthier, more muscular males – while still good mates – will actually be chased out of herds or groups if they're found to be aggressive or selfish.

Not that this has anything to do with people who cheat in online games for selfish reasons, or how 'jock-mentality' is on the decline thanks to it being a negative selection trait for getting some booty. **Nope.**

With regards to my thinking on win/loss tracking fostering a culture of selfishness and cheaters, I realise it's an opinion. After all, "it doesn't matter if you win or lose, it's how you play the game" is easily countered by "if it doesn't matter if you win or lose, why do they keep score?" Games are, by nature, a system that relies on having a win state and a fail state, or they wouldn't

be games, they'd be toys.

The chest-thumping cavemen babies that speak primarily in smack talk will most likely be a permanent fixture in online gaming, just because things played out in ways that support the continued existence of that culture. The exact size and impact of that specific culture will, however, diminish over time, in part due to gamers gaining a better awareness of how their actions have long-tail impact on how others treat them. In the meantime, it's easy enough to avoid them: just don't join any clan-centric servers, or ranked systems, so no harm and no foul really.

In time, as the ranking and tracking systems become more sophisticated and can tell the difference between a disconnect or a 'loss-dodge', and the anti-cheating measures actually start working without causing more harm than good (the MMO, *Aion*, had to drop its anti-cheat systems because they interfered with normal operation), then perhaps the must-win culture will lose its edge. There's still the problem of just how arbitrary rank systems really are: look at what happened with *Battle.net* and *StarCraft*.

Pro players would 'smurf' (create new low-level accounts under new handles) so they could wail on less experienced players for whatever reasons, probably because they hated playing against other pro-level people like themselves. Inexperienced players would get high rankings anyway by being in team games with 'smurfing'-experienced players, and such people would eventually bring down high-level games due to their n00b status anyway. The whole system was a mess, and hasn't really been fixed. Xbox LIVE avoids 'smurfing' by having a fee attached to Gold account creation, but as *Gears* players can tell you, the TrueSkill™ player-matching system rarely works as it should.

Toss it all out, I say. If players want to gloat over wins and losses, they'll do so anyway without automatic systems that just encourage winning at all costs. Case's Ladder is a good example of how gamers will set up their own ranking systems, usually with far less peril to the mental health of the group as a whole. At the end of the day, it's a real "who cares anyway" subject, but I figured that I'd throw it out there anyway. **NAG**

The chest-thumping cavemen babies that **speak primarily in smack talk will most likely be a permanent fixture in** online gaming...





AVAILABLE NOVEMBER  
LET THE DARKSIDE OUT

18+  
www.pegi.info

Wii

CAPCOM

NuMetro  
Interactive

# RESIDENT EVIL

THE DARKSIDE CHRONICLES

WWW.RESIDENTEVIL.COM/DARKSIDE

©CAPCOM CO., LTD. 2009. All rights reserved. Trademarks are property of their respective owners. Wii is a trademark of Nintendo.





BY MIKLÓS SZECSEI

## Give me one good reason why I should

**WITHIN THE FIRST FEW** pages of the manual for *Gears of War 2*, the Design Director for Epic Games, Cliff "CliffyB" Bleszinski writes a very nice letter to the game's fans. In the letter he states that the success of a game depends on the gamer's willingness to become immersed and believe in the world they are playing within. He adds that we are often pitted against insurmountable odds and forced to face dire situations. In short, he says, "Videogame designers ask a lot of their players." When one considers the worn-out device that drives forward the narratives of most action games, you'll see he couldn't be more spot on.

When I look back at recent triple-A titles, I can't think of many that haven't relied on the yawn-inducing, stale plot device of "the fate of humanity is in your hands™." I've honestly stopped counting the amount of times I've saved the world or prevented some universe-obliterating phenomenon from happening. It's almost as if designers have lost faith in their ability to induce some form of emotional investment in gamers, so they present us with this dull predicament in order to get us to finish the game. It's clichéd as hell, and honestly, sometimes I just don't feel up to saving humanity for the umpteenth time. Sometimes I just want to focus on something a little less ambitious. Perhaps this is why *The Sims* is such a hit with many gamers: it's like a holiday away from the daily gaming grind of saving everything in existence.

Using *Mass Effect* as an example, the overall goal is to stop the robotic Geth from wiping out every sentient species in the galaxy. Did that threat compel me to play the game to its conclusion? Of course not. I was far more interested in the relationships between Shepard and his crew, and whether or not the human race would earn the respect of older, alien species. Therefore, for me the plot and its conclusion were more of a shell for housing a compelling game dynamic and characters. My reasons for wanting to finish the game were definitely less ambitious than what they were supposed to have been, which raises the question: do we need humanity or the galaxy to be threatened in order to persuade us to play through to a conclusion?

The *Gears of War* games are open to similar observations. The overarching premise is that humanity is doomed unless you ensure that Marcus and the rest of Delta Squad complete their mission. Great gaming aside, from a narrative perspective, the tried-and-tested "humanity's saviour" plot device was dead to me. What did make me want to progress through *Gear of War 2*, however (and in admitting this, I'm bracing myself for a chainsaw bayonet to the face next time I'm online), was the sub-plot of helping rescue Dom's wife. Okay, I'll admit it was cheesy in its

execution, but once it had reached its conclusion, I was pretty much finishing the game purely for the action. The fact that I was supposed to be saving humanity (again) was never a motivating factor. It surprises me how often the sub-plots and sidetracks are far more appealing than the main, narrative goal.

The examples could continue: *Killzone 2*, *Crysis*, *Halo*, *Half-Life 2*, *Fallout 3*, *Resistance: Fall of Man* (see, they don't even hide the cliché in a title like that) and even, to a certain extent, *Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare* are all hinged on the assumption that if you suck and fail, then humanity and civilised society are doomed.

So, if this narrative device is cut and pasted from one game to the next, why on Earth do developers continue to use it? Perhaps by threatening the human race's demise because of your failure, designers hope that it will automatically elevate their game into the realm of the epic. If that is the case, then I'm not convinced: there has to be more contributing factors that would make a game epic. Come on! Dangle a fresh narrative carrot in front of us, not this limp and mouldy excuse for a root vegetable that so often gets forced down our throats.

Just because their narrative-driving plot devices were clichés did not make the aforementioned games boring to **play** through. All of the above titles were great fun, but I often find myself wondering how much better the overall experience would have been had there been more originality – a break from the safe device, a new narrative carrot. **NAG**

When I look back at recent triple-A titles, I can't think of many that haven't relied on the yawn-inducing, stale plot device of "the fate of humanity is in your hands™." **I've honestly stopped counting the amount of times I've saved the world or prevented some universe-obliterating phenomenon from happening.**



# BORDERLANDS™

LOCK, LOAD AND  
FACE THE MADNESS!

GET READY for the  
MIND-BLOWING INSANITY  
as one of **FOUR TRIGGER-HAPPY**  
MERCENARIES, TAKING OUT EVERYTHING  
THAT STANDS IN YOUR WAY.



[BORDERLANDSTHEGAME.COM](http://BORDERLANDSTHEGAME.COM)



PLAYSTATION 3



XBOX 360



www.megarom.co.za



THE WAY IT'S MEANT TO BE PLAYED



© 2009 Gearbox Software, LLC. All rights reserved. Published and distributed by 2K Games under license from Gearbox Software, LLC. Borderlands is a trademark of Gearbox Software and used under license. 2K Games and the 2K Games logo are trademarks of 2K Games in the U.S. and/or other countries. Gearbox Software and the Gearbox logo are registered trademarks of Gearbox Software, LLC in the U.S. and/or other countries. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies. "PlayStation", "PLAYSTATION" and "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. NVIDIA, the NVIDIA logo, and The Way It's Meant To Be Played are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of NVIDIA Corporation. All rights reserved. All other trademarks are property of their respective owners.





Developer → Gearbox Software

Publisher → 2K Games

Web → [www.borderlandsthegame.com](http://www.borderlandsthegame.com)

Release Date → October 2009

# BORDERLANDS

## Diablo with guns

Genre → Role-Playing Shooter

PC 360 PS3 Wii PS2 PSP DS

Well, we've arrived. This hellhole of a planet is on the arse end of the galaxy, and we're here to tear it apart, piece by piece, until we find what we're looking for. Pandora used to be a prison planet. The corporations landed here seven years ago and put their prisoners to work, looking for alien artefacts and valuable minerals. They found pretty much bugger all, and when Pandora's orbit finally spun her out of a decade-long winter, they realised that they were better off back home than they were here.

Those with money to spare left before too long. They abandoned their prisoners in search of the ironically greener pastures back home. But with the newfound warmth of spring came newfound dangers: horrible creatures began to emerge from the mountains, caves and depths of the planet. The remaining population turned to anarchy, forming bands of brigands and psychopaths that did their best to survive among the chaos and dangers. Now, Pandora is a massive warzone. Gangs fight for territory and those who chose the quiet life, tend to stick to themselves, hoping they'll make it through the next night without being attacked by bandits, or skags, or worse.

It was then that the rumours began of a majestic alien vault carved in the side of a mountain: a vault filled with alien technology. That's why we're here: to find that damned thing and get the hell off this rock before the locals tear us apart. We're all here for different reasons. Some want money; others fame. I'm just here for answers.





# LANDS

## WHERE TO BEGIN...

**A**BOUT A MONTH BEFORE rAge 2009, Geoff "I'm a real boy!" Burrows and I 'accidentally' overheard an interesting phone conversation between Commander Michael "I'm not camping!" James and... someone. What made this conversation particularly exciting (and unnerving) to us was that our names were being thrown around. We were also interrogated as to what our favourite beverages are mid-conversation. To cut a long story short, we later discovered that Michael had been talking to our good friend Andrew from Megarom, who was offering us a chance to play *Borderlands* at Megarom's luxurious offices. Naturally, we got ahead of ourselves with excitement at the prospect of free, cold beverages and, if we pestered them enough, perhaps lunch to go with that. Oh, and playing *Borderlands* while drinking and eating all this free stuff would also be nice.

Weeks went by with no call. We started wondering if Megarom had found companionship in someone else. We began to question our value to Megarom. What did we do wrong? We were so careful to cover our tracks when we left EA that night. Could they have somehow found out? We weren't sure, but we left the ball in their court.

After spending many nights drunkenly wishing Megarom would take us back, Andrew gave Michael a call and requested that we join him (together with Devon, another dude from Megarom) on an epic quest into the *Borderlands* shortly after we were done with rAge. We wept golden tears of joy nonstop for the next three and a half days... We would finally get our hands on some free stuff!

We spent the three days at rAge longingly watching Joe Public smearing his grubby paws all over the machines that Megarom had set up to demo *Borderlands* at our expo. We collectively shed one more tear wondering why Megarom

had skimped on their offer of tasty beverages for so long. Oh, and why we weren't the ones playing *Borderlands*.

So, on that fateful day after rAge, Andrew and Devon arrived at NAG, brandishing our beverages and a bag of potato chips as a peace offering. Oh, and they also brought machines pre-installed with *Borderlands*. Their boardroom was occupied for the day and they required ours in order to get this long-overdue LAN up and running. We were set up within minutes, not wanting to seem rude by diving straight into that bottle of Coca-Cola. Oh, and something about *Borderlands*...

After polishing off the free foodstuffs, we figured we owed it to Andrew and Devon to play the game, so we started it up while licking our fingers clean of free potato-chip grease. Since it looked like a LAN and it felt like a LAN, we were immediately plagued with some of the symptoms of LAN gaming – incorrect IP addresses and busted audio on my machine. I dropped out

**"ELDER SKAGS ARE NOT OF THE 'OLD AND DODDERING, AND SMELLING OF FRESHLY BAKED COOKIES' VARIETY, BUT RATHER THE 'JUMP ON YOU, AND KILL YOU WITH MY CLAWS FASTER THAN ANY OF THESE YOUNG 'UNS' SIDE OF THINGS."**





of our already up-and-running LAN server, fixed my audio problems, and jumped back into the game without skipping a beat. Drop-in/drop-out co-op gets me excited, so I may have giggled a little [You did - Geoff]. Unfortunately, I'd now missed out on the long speech given to the rest of the guys by the little robot/dustbin thing that was standing in front of me when I entered the game (I recognised him as Claptrap, a recurring character in the game and its numerous trailers). Confusion reigned supreme at this point, since the majority of the game's introduction had just passed me by, so...

-Dane

**B**EFORE I CONTINUE, I feel it's important to mention that there was also pizza at our little LAN party. It was delicious, but the Mexican was a little too spicy, if you ask me. Anyway, so there we were, standing in front of Fyrestone, the starting town in *Borderlands*. Devon's character was Lilith, the assassin/mage, Andrew played

the sniper/hunter called Mordecai, Dane picked Roland, the soldier/medic, and in a momentary lapse of originality, I too chose Lilith. While everyone else fumbled about with headsets and Coca-Cola, I was first into the game and already scavenging for loot, which I found inside a couple of conveniently illuminated boxes.

Andrew tells us that we can initiate a duel by 'melee-ing' each other, which Dane and I promptly put to the test. I kill Dane; he is upset that a little girl just beat up a dude twice her size. While this is going on, the dustbin Dane mentioned earlier is explaining that we're by the town of Fyrestone, and there are some bandits and stuff, and soon we'll get to kill them.

Boy, do we kill them. Despite its role-playing attachments, *Borderlands* is a shooter through and through. If you pop a few rounds into a nearby enemy, it takes damage - there are no dice rolls like in *Hellgate: London* or *Fallout 3*, but your accuracy score does determine the size of your cone of fire.

Once we hit the town, we discover a crazy doctor by the name of Zed, who sends us off on our first quest to kill some of the local fauna and return to him for a reward. So, we set off in search of our unwary prey, some little dog-demon scaly things called skags, and promptly destroy a few of them. While we're hammering away with our guns, XP is pouring out of the enemy, and they drop random loot just like in *Diablo*. It's then that we're informed of the 'collect all' command for mass-looting, which I use. I continue to use this throughout our entire play session, in fact, until Dane starts commenting on how little ammo he has. I have loads of ammo. Apparently, group-looting policies aren't on the table at this stage.

On our way back to Zed, we encounter the Fyrestone Coliseum. It takes some fiddling with the interface for me to figure out just what the hell we're supposed to do to initiate a battle. I eventually figure it out, and the four of us are thrust into a few rounds of two-on-two

# ROLAND as "The Soldier"

## ROLAND

The soldier. Roland is a former member of the Crimson Lance - the military wing of Atlas Corporation. He's on a mission when he discovers that the leader of the brigands could possibly be the man that he swore to kill over a decade ago.

**Active ability:** Scorpio Turret - Gain the ability to deploy a Scorpio Turret that automatically fires at enemies. The Scorpio Turret also has shields that can be used as cover. It can be upgraded to fire rockets, or to provide healing and even ammunition.

**Skill specialisations:** Infantry | Support | Medic.

**Preferred weapons:** Combat rifles and shotguns.







"HE'S A COMPLETE NUTTER, AND HAS SOME PROBE THINGS ON HIS NIPPLES, BUT WE'RE NOT SURE THAT ACTUALLY DOES ANYTHING FOR HIS COMBAT ABILITIES."

## MORDECAI

Mordecai is a hunter, and a sniper. He's come to Pandora to seek out a man from his past known as Yujinny. But when he discovers that Yujinny has died, he sets off to discover his cause of death, and what he was carrying.

**Active ability:** Bloodwing – Gain the ability to send your pet Bloodwing out to attack an enemy and then return. Can be upgraded to improve damage and speed.

**Skill specialisations:** Sniper | Rogue | Gunslinger.

**Preferred weapons:** Sniper rifles and revolvers.





deathmatch. Dane and I throw some bullets at each other, while Andrew and Devon, who are using their existing level-ten characters, battle it out. The battle is soon over, and we're popped back into the game world with a few bruises and considerably less ammo. I can't remember who won, but I'm sure it was me anyway.

When we return to Zed with a bag full of skag carcasses, he tells us about some zany hermit called TK Baha, who lives outside of town – apparently he's had some skag trouble of his own, and needs four convenient new arrivals to take care of business. Before we leave, we're shown a nearby vending machine, which sells healing kits and energy shields. I bust all of my hard-pilfered loot on the fanciest shield I can find, only to realise that I'm two levels too low to wear the thing. Devon hears my whines and chucks me a 'little something' he's had lying around his inventory. It rocks the socks off anything I could have paid money for.

We mosey on out of town in search of TK Baha. Andrew keeps calling him TJ, and I have to correct him. We eventually find the old fool and, just like Zed told us, he's in need of some youngsters to help him out. Off we go, in search of more skags. This time, we come across a couple that are a little bigger than those before. Just like in *Diablo*,

there are different grades of the same creature, but here, they're easily distinguishable from one another by the balls of acid they're spitting in our faces, or the word prefixing their names. Take note: Elder skags are not of the 'old and doddering, and smelling of freshly baked cookies' variety, but rather the 'jump on you, and kill you with my claws faster than any of these young 'uns' side of things. It's here that we notice that carefully aiming your bullets down the exposed gullets of the skags guarantees us a critical hit (double damage) each time. It's the same for all of the enemies we encounter, but each foe has a different weak spot that you can aim for.

–Geoff

**I CAN'T FIND ANY DAMN** ammo. The supposedly badass SMG that I'm carrying chews through ammo about thirty times faster than I can collect it. I suspect that Geoff, Andrew and Devon might have found a hack that lets them collect every bit of ammo from the **entire game world** simply by hitting a single super-hack activating key. It's okay, though: this game is so much like *Diablo* with guns that I've already devised a master plan to be the first to find the Horadric Cube and Wirt's leg. I will then place the leg and a Tome of Town Portal inside the Cube, jiggle it about

and voila: the Secret Cow Level, *Borderlands*-style (perhaps it'd be the Secret Brahmin Level, since *Borderlands* reminds me of *Fallout*). It's totally going to happen and when it does, the first thing I plan on doing with my newfound power is holding access to the Secret Cow/ Brahmin Level to ransom for some ammo. At the moment, however, we're fighting these scaly dog things that I know are going to haunt my dreams later on. We're looking for TK's (not TJ's) stolen food, which we happen to find stashed in an exceptionally unsanitary pile of bones covered in fleshy (and gross) brown stuff that is exuding a pungent, green mist. I wonder to myself why TK would actually want this dodgy grub back after its unsavoury journey into the unknown land of fleshy (and gross) brown stuff, but he seems ecstatic when we hand him his putrid food. He even pays us for it and sends us off to find some dude named Marcus Kincaid. I begin to wonder whether he might have some ammo for me.

We make the long haul off to Fyrestone, only stopping so I can challenge Geoff to a duel. We've duelled like a thousand times already and I haven't won a single one. I don't get it. His character is essentially a little girl and I'm some manly soldier guy. It must be my gun, because no matter which character class you choose

“... **EACH WEAPON IN BORDERLANDS IS MADE BY ITS OWN UNIQUE MANUFACTURER.**”





## LILITH

Lilith is one of six, known Sirens in the universe, but she was once human. Sirens are a race that have been touched by alien technology, and possess unbelievable power. Lilith has come to Pandora in search of another Siren she believes to be there and to discover more about her past.

**Active ability:** Phasewalk – Gain the ability to turn invisible and move incredibly quickly. Upon entering and leaving Phasewalk, you create a Phase Blast that damages nearby enemies. Can be upgraded to add stun damage, or allow healing while Phasewalking.

**Skill specialisations:** Controller | Elemental | Assassin.

**Preferred weapons:** Incendiary, Shock and Corrosive guns.

with **LILITH**  
as **"The Siren"**





in the game, you can use any weapon you find. This means that Geoff/the little girl can wield even the largest machine gun/rocket launcher/nuclear missile he/she may find. I suspect that he may be cheating by using a console command that automatically gives him a better gun than me each time I pick up a new weapon. Like the others, I lose this duel horribly. Geoff's a dirty cheater...

It turns out that Marcus is a 'weapons dealer'. We learn that each weapon in *Borderlands* is made by its own unique manufacturer. Each manufacturer has its own unique style, both in terms of the aesthetics of their weapons and their functionality. I don't really care. This guy's store contains a weapon-vending machine that sells ammo, and I want some. I try shooting him in the face so I can have the ammo for free (I don't want to part with any of my cash, even though I have a boatload of money). It doesn't work. He just stares at me with this blank look in his eyes. I choose to hoard my money regardless, and take my chances trying to beat the ammo-stealing cheats used by my comrades. They're such dirty cheaters...

Marcus gives us another quest. We're

supposed to head off and kill a bandit named Nine-Toes. He sounds like a douche, so I agree. Guys with names that begin with a numerical value and end with a human appendage are always shifty and worth shooting at. Along the way to Skag Gully (where Nine-Toes is supposed to be hiding out), we run into crazy 'flying-rat-pterodactyl' things (Geoff says they're called Rakks, but Geoff also likes tea, so I don't believe him) that start pecking at our faces while I throw empty ammo magazines at them.

-Dane

**WE CONTINUE THROUGH SKAG** Gully in search of Nine-Toes; Dane seems to be having trouble with ammo, and has taken to using his melee attack a lot. Thankfully, we've both hit level 5 since entering this area, which gives us access to our unique active abilities. Dane has been dropping that turret like it's going out of fashion, but I'm finding Lilith's invisibility ability more useful as a travel form than anything else. At least it gives me an edge when I'm chasing Dane around, trying to accept the duel challenges that he keeps handing out... and losing.

We've finally hit the end of Skag Gully. We've

been encountering progressively more violent and better-armed bandits all the while. Midget psychopaths with shotguns are pretty funny when they're chasing after Dane; a little less entertaining when they're shooting me in the face. We find Nine-Toes. He's a complete nutter, and has some probe things on his nipples, but we're not sure that, besides making him look silly, it actually does anything for his combat abilities. He does, however, have a repeater pistol that shoots incendiary rounds, which creates a feeling of general discontent. When we're done killing him with bullets of our own, I promptly loot his pistol. It is a wonderful thing. Dane and I have another duel on the way back, in which I reinforce my newfound pistol's awesomeness.

We head back to Fyrestone to hand in our quest. Now we've got a couple of options for missions, including a newly-unlocked bounty board that's filled with choices for quick and dirty 'grind' missions; I take a couple and add them to the group quest log. We chat to Doc Zed, and he tells us about the Catch-A-Ride system. It's a vehicle-spawning device just



and  
**BRICK**  
as  
**HIMSELF**

## BRICK

Brick likes to use his head when it comes to combat... and his fists... and his feet. He's a big guy, and uses his size to his advantage. If ever you need someone to stand in front of the bad guys while you shoot at them from a mile away, Brick's your man.

**Active ability:** Berserk - Gain the ability to go Berserk. While Berserk, the mouse buttons throw punches. You also gain resistance to all damage and you regenerate health while Berserking. Can be upgraded to provide a variety of extra damage and a charge attack.

**Skill specialisations:** Brawler | Tank | Blaster.

**Preferred weapons:** Explosive weapons and his fists.



outside of town; the technology is based on an ancient alien system that the Atlas Company has reverse-engineered. Coincidentally, that same engineering is what powers most of the tech on Pandora. We reach the Catch-A-Ride to discover the damn thing is busted. After much clicking, some exploring, and a chat to TK, we make the necessary repairs (it was missing the primary Digistruct Module... of course) and, with a further few clicks, spawn two bright and shiny Range Racers. Andrew and Devon take one, leaving me relegated to driving shotgun with Dane "how the hell do you steer a car with a mouse?" Remendes.

-Geoff

**BORDERLANDS MAKES ME WISH** that I had a car with a rocket launcher attachment. It also makes me thankful that people don't drive real-world cars with a computer mouse. I eventually get the hang of steering this 'death trap with an engine' after about 20 minutes of hearing Geoff's surprisingly high-pitched screaming as we narrowly miss every obstacle in the gargantuan game world. Hearing Geoff's girly screams [I was role-playing! -Geoff] is

always bizarrely satisfying, so I decide that the Range Racers are awesome and continue to have as many near-misses as possible. You can't run out of vehicular ammo either, which is great. We crash into Andrew and Devon a lot - I think they may be getting slightly irritated by my truly amazing driving skills. They inform me (via a mixture of sign language and assorted military hand signals - we can't communicate verbally over Geoff's audible femininity) that we're supposed to be hunting for someone named Sledge. After crashing into a small (but impossibly sturdy) rock, I follow them into the unknown.

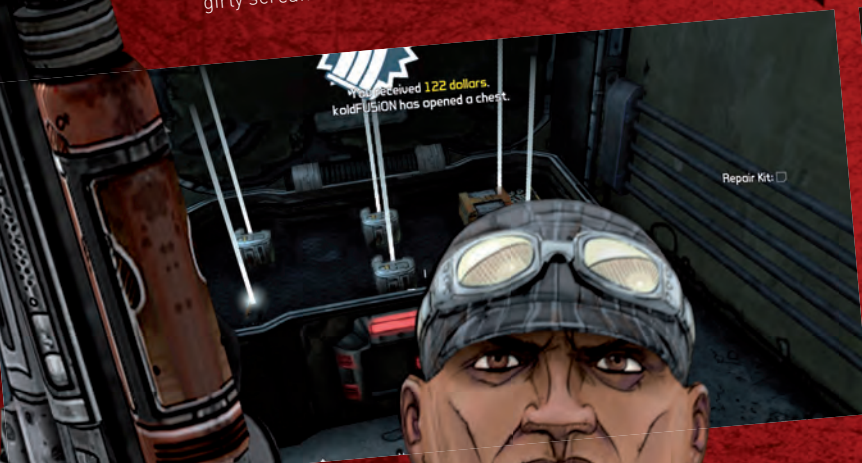
Along the way to Sledge's lair, we complete a bunch of mini-quests of the 'kill 20 skags and bring me six bandit footesues' variety. My shiny, new turret helps with this. I have no idea how this particular turret is able to dispense health and ammo, but it's incredibly awesome and those abilities were in my skill tree, so I spent skill points on them. It means that my ammo problem is alleviated a bit and it's also nice to hear the other guy's appreciation for my turret's support.

We've somehow ended up in our first dungeon. I'm not sure how we got here. I

suspect that somebody may be cheating. We're running around battling "Badass" enemies (the game designates this title to extremely powerful enemies) and it's not going too well. There's also a huge "Roid Rage Psycho" (another game-designated title) boss enemy who's about ten times our collective size. Approximately 100 revives and a million rounds of spent ammo later, we emerge from the dungeon, victorious. I'm not entirely sure what we triumphed over, but it makes me feel all warm and fuzzy regardless. Geoff and I both reached character level 12 (I think that in the real world we regressed back to Level 2 Excitable Schoolchildren) over the five or so hours that we rocked *Borderlands*. If there's anything that we learnt from the experience, it's that this is going to be one extremely enjoyable game. It's highly likely that we barely scratched the surface of the game and we truly cannot wait to continue the journey across Pandora.

A very special thanks to Andrew and Devon from Megarom for organising the whole thing... and for putting up with our tomfoolery. :)

-Dane



"... THIS GAME IS SO MUCH LIKE DIABLO WITH GUNS..."



# BIO SHOCK 2

Big daddy and little sister sitting in a tree...



HANDS ON

Genre → Survival Horror Shooter

PC 360 PS3 Wii PS2 PSP DS

The seemingly rundown warehouse close to the San Francisco bay docks, where the bus deposited our gaggle of multicultural journalists, seemed more like the place you take someone to 'take care of them' by adding cement boots and assisting them into the murky waters. Beyond the unhappy, burly bouncer, through the whitewashed doors, an open bar glows in the dark, as if to appease the journalists after their hazardous flights to the event.

Surrounding the booze are 78 huge LCD screens, each with an Xbox 360 glowing beside it. Over the speakers, a soft hum; then, a drone fading into the crackle of an un-tuned, old-time radio. Randomly, radio talk show hosts drift out of the noise, speaking of little girls being abducted in the night – eyewitness reports indicate "strange, red glowing eyes" dragging victims into the sea.

## RETURN TO RAPTURE

The story of *BioShock* is the **setting** of Rapture. Wealthy industrialist, Andrew Ryan, decided to build a Utopian city at the bottom of the sea. He believed in Rational Self-Interest: that everyone only owes themselves their effort. His idea: to take the best and brightest down there, and protect them from outside influences like the government and church. They would bring about the ascent of man.

Like most Utopian fiction, things didn't work out and everything went south really fast. To say anything more would spoil *BioShock*, so **would you kindly** go play that first if you're interested in *BioShock 2*?

*BioShock 2* takes place ten years after the first game. Since the death of Andrew Ryan, one of his old political rivals has come to power. Dr Sophia Lamb, a clinical psychiatrist, an idealist, is now using Rapture to promote her own vision. The player's conflict with Lamb comes from his or her own nature. In the sequel, you play as a prototype Big Daddy: an armoured, hulking bodyguard in an antique diving suit.

Big Daddies are slaves to Rapture, protecting the Little Sisters that harvest ADAM – genetic material – from corpses. *BioShock 2* starts with the awakening of a 'Delta' Big Daddy, with the player as his newfound 'free will'. Crossing the city ten



## Who's your Daddy?



"We come across a Little Sister and a doting Big Daddy: **the look, feel and sounds of Rapture every bit as fascinatingly baroque** as in the first game."

years after all that, he remembers. He searches for his former Little Sister. He's bonded to just one girl – she's the only one that gives him any kind of meaning.

*A presenter walks on stage and starts to play a level from BioShock 2 called Siren Alley.*

## SIREN ALLEY

The Red Light district of Rapture, Siren Alley used to be where masons and architects would gather to draft blueprints and expand the city. But as it fell, these wealthy, brilliant people had to sell themselves. We're looking for a pumping station: much of Rapture has flooded, and we need to cross a section that's entirely under water. Dr Sophia Lamb has put her most prominent and vicious lieutenant in our path: Father Simon Wales. He's got a kind of underground church built into the pumping station, and doesn't approve of us defiling his holy ground.

We come across a Little Sister and a doting Big Daddy: the look, feel and sounds of Rapture every bit as fascinatingly baroque as in the first game. This Big Daddy protecting his charge is a new type, the Rumbler. He's different from us; more defensive – the type who throws down perimeter turrets and attacks with his bazooka. The demonstrator hacks a security bot, equips the Telekinesis Plasmid and attacks the Big Daddy, catching the incoming rockets and throwing them back. The Little Sister screams and shouts support for her Big

Daddy, hissing venom at us.

The Big Daddy is taken down, his corpse looted for his items and weapons, and the Little Sister is adopted. She now rides atop our shoulders, leading us to ADAM-filled corpses. Splicers come after us, addicted to the ADAM (which is what caused the civil war that brought about the fall of Rapture in the first place).

We find a corpse in range of a Rapture security camera, led there by the Little Sister's ability to show us a pheromone trail to the ADAM. The camera is hacked from a distance using a Hack Dart. Hacking doesn't pause the gaming anymore, so you can weave it into an action play style. In preparation for harvesting the ADAM, the presenter lays down some Cyclone Traps using plasmids, and combines it with some Winter Blast. Plasmid combinations are a big part of the sequel. Trap Rivets are shot into the ground, and when triggered, they shoot up into the groin of whoever triggered them.

Just like fighting a Big Daddy, the battle to protect a harvesting Little Sister is consensual: you decide when it starts, so you have time to plan and prepare. Once started, the battle has us drilling into splicers, slamming them into walls, freezing them, all the while keeping the Little Sister in view in case she needs help. Splicers can't hurt her, but they will slow down the harvesting if they reach her. The hacked security system sends flying drones to help.

The dynamic siege has a new participant, the Splicer Brute, who sits



at the top of the ADAM food chain. Very powerful and very pumped up with Plasmids, no two are really alike. The battle is intense. It's clear that Jack, the lead protagonist from the first game, wouldn't survive in the world of Rapture ten years later. Even as a Big Daddy, it's a brutal place.

ADAM harvested, we upgrade our DNA with Gene Tonics and new Plasmids. We take on Simon Wales in his Temple of the Lamb – his vitriolic preaching echoing off the metal walls. Father Simon Wales has spun a religion around Lamb's collectivist philosophy. Whereas Andrew Ryan is about self-interest, Lamb believes we have a moral obligation to the world in its entirety. But when altruism goes bad, it tends to create martyrs. Rapture is the place where good ideas, when taken to an extreme, go monstrous.

Finding out why your Little Sister is so important, not just to the Delta Big Daddy, but also to Rapture as a whole, is one of the mysteries in *BioShock 2*. We return our adopted Little Sister to one of the Little Sister holes, presented with the choice to harvest her or 'turn her human'. We're promised (see the interview) that this time, our choices will mean something.

Suddenly a Big Sister appears, lithe and powerful. She floods the section we're in, with water exploding from everywhere. The entire area floods and we walk through an underwater nightmare: dead splicers float in front of us; a shark swims in through one of the broken windows, taking a meal just above our heads.

*Fade to black... We're told to go try a level for ourselves, titled Ryan Amusements.*

## RYAN AMUSEMENTS

*BioShock* has an inescapable atmosphere. While the gunplay, plasmid powers and *System Shock*-inspired elements are all interesting in their own right, the real centrepiece of *BioShock* is, beyond a doubt, the allure of Rapture. Its art-deco styling and '50s era themes are, in a gaming universe dominated by

brown, cement and space marines, quite fresh. Where the first game used Randian objectivism as a backdrop for its plot, the sequel throws even more geeky pseudo-intellectualism into the pot. And we love it: it leads to perversely demented situations like Ryan Amusements.

The level takes place in an amusement park. Rapture, having mommies and daddies who make babies who grow up to wonder what the Sun is like, needed something to 'sour' children against the surface. So, while we're hacking, fighting and enjoying the much-improved Gene Bank interface, the environment itself is fascinating. Dilapidated steam-powered mechanical displays, showing the oppression of man by the church and government, wheeze and shudder to life when we trigger them. Their noise draws the attention of splicers, demanding the Little Sister on our shoulders.

The hacking is no longer that 'Pipe Mania' mini game. It's in real time: a needle swings from left to right, passing over red, green and blue bars. Hit the button at the right time for green or blue a few times, and you're in. Some of the new weapons include a Spear Gun with rocket spears, the Big Daddy drill with upgrades that allow it to deflect bullets, a Gatling gun and a Rivet Gun. The Spear Gun is very useful for nailing splicers to the wall.

While the level itself wasn't all that long, and set early in the game to prevent spoilers, the key things we noticed are:

- Graphically, it looks the same – **and as good** – as the first game;
- The controls feel good;
- The sound is top notch; and
- Many of the annoying interface elements from the first game (like the Gene Bank) have been given a major overhaul.

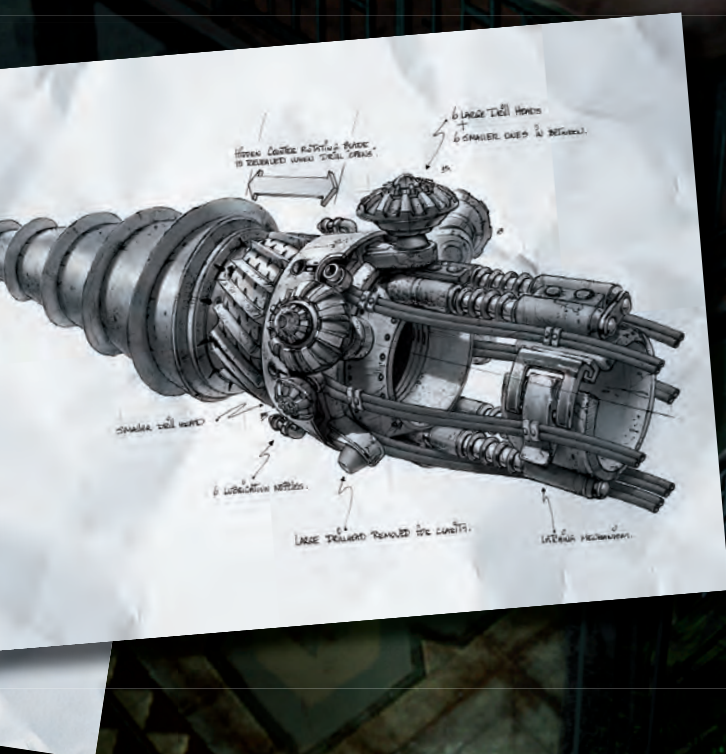
If anything, playing *BioShock 2* felt like we never left Rapture in the first place – except now we're a Big Daddy, and that improves things even more.







"If anything, playing **BioShock 2** felt like we never left Rapture in the first place – except now we're a Big Daddy; and that improves things even more."



We picked a side and joined a match in progress, hoping to drill that annoying journalist from Sweden.

## MULTIPLAYER

It's a surprise to see multiplayer in a game like *BioShock*, but Digital Extremes (with their *Unreal Tournament* history) seem to have done a good job incorporating it into the game's fiction. The multiplayer takes place in the civil war, set one year before the first game. You select a character (we were shown six); each with their own detailed back-story. You customise them with masks; change the look of their melee weapon, and pre-select three load-outs. A load-out consists of two weapons, two Plasmids and three tonics. There are five game types plus two variants, though we were only shown Survival of the Fittest (deathmatch), Capture the Sister (a capture-the-flag variant), and Civil War (team deathmatch).

Capture the Sister sees one team trying to capture a Little Sister, who is held by the other team. The defending side gets a Big Daddy suit off the bat (it has to be found once it has spawned in the other game types). The Big Daddy player can drop turrets and

generally cause havoc. There is a lot of emphasis on creative plasmid-combination use, and you can hack turrets in the level (it takes time). If you nab the Little Sister, she fights and screams as you hold her – which is quite unsettling – as you attempt to drag her to a Little Sister hole.

A nice touch, and homage to the research aspect of the first game, is that you can take pictures of enemy corpses to gain a damage bonus against that player. Much like contemporary multiplayer games like *Call of Duty*, in *BioShock 2*, you rank up by gaining ADAM (experience) in matches, which unlocks more weapons and plasmids. There are multiplayer 'trials', 'mini-objectives' in weapon use and plasmid-combination use, which give you more ADAM, ranking you up faster if you aim to complete them.

One complaint we have is that the multiplayer felt very vague and 'ethereal': shooting an opponent with guns or Plasmids, or even being shot, lacked the kind of 'punch' that makes the experience more tactile and engrossing. Time will tell if this will be an actual failing of the multiplayer component, or something that can be safely ignored (or fixed via a patch).



# Interview

**WE SAT DOWN WITH** Alyssa Finley, Executive Producer on *BioShock 2*, and Carlos Cuello, Lead Programmer, and had ourselves a nice little chat. Carlos has a dog – a boxer – called Apollo, which he likes to bring to the office. Alyssa has a cat. We're assured by Alyssa that "she's lovely", while Carlos nods in agreement.


**NAG: It's surprising how similar the experience of playing *BioShock 2* is to playing the first game. It feels like a real continuation – almost like an expansion. Would you say there is enough new content to merit calling *BioShock 2* a true sequel?**

**Alyssa:** "I think it does merit being a true sequel. I think the fact that you're playing a Big Daddy really changes who you are in the world, how you fit in the power structure in the world and the things that you can do in the world. I think it really adds a lot of depth to the gameplay: being able to have a much more extensive relationship with the Little Sisters than you did in the first game. We've really tried to expand some of the storytelling mechanisms we had in the first game. There're characters you can meet in the world who aren't splicers. Who are coherent, who can have a conversation with you or, at least, you can hear them talking and hear what they have to say. And you have choices to make that affect how they survive in the world as well, so you are able to affect their story."

**NAG: What would you say was one of the biggest challenges you faced with *BioShock 2*?**

**Carlos:** "There're several. *BioShock* is critically acclaimed, and any time you take on a sequel to that, it's a big challenge and a big risk. We're a new studio that started up for this project, with some members from the original *BioShock*. We also wanted to expand the gameplay, expand the story, and take on multiplayer at the same time. We really had a few challenges."

**Alyssa:** "I think we recognise the origins that we're coming from and we know there are tremendously high expectations coming in, so I think that's a challenge as well. We want to live up to the people's expectations: try to give them, as you said, a continuation where you walk into the world and it feels familiar if they played the first game. It feels like something they understand. But then we deepen the experience overall: give them more tools, more 'verbs' that they can interact with the world with – play the way they want to play."



"If you nab the Little Sister, **she fights and screams as you hold her – which is quite unsettling** – as you attempt to drag her to a Little Sister hole."



**NAG:** The multiplayer is cleverly incorporated into the fiction – thematically and in terms of how the systems like ranking up play out. Were you apprehensive about adding multiplayer to something that is traditionally seen as a very single-player-focused experience?

**Alyssa:** “We knew we had to take it very seriously. There was a terrible risk of doing it poorly, and we did not want to do that. So, when we thought about it, the way we solved the problem was to say, ‘let’s not try to have one team doing everything’. [That way, you get the worst of both worlds.] So, we had a team focusing on the single player, just like the first game, to make sure that that experience is everything people expect. And then, at the same time, we had an entirely separate team working on multiplayer [that team has deep multiplayer roots]. We felt that was the best way to make sure that both sides of the game got the attention it deserved, and at the same time, create a multiplayer experience that people will have fun with, play around in, and experience what it’s like to have Plasmids, to be a splicer...”

**NAG:** While some might miss the ‘Pipe Mania’ hacking mechanic from the first game, where else do you think you improved the flow of the game and streamlined the experience?

**Alyssa:** “In general, we tried to find more ways to say ‘yes’ to the player. Like being able to combine a vortex trap with other Plasmids, it seems like something you’re supposed to be able to do. ‘I want to throw them in the air and freeze them at the same time. Cool, I can do that’. Gene Banks have come a long way in the last ten years of Rapture [laughs]. Really, we just tried to make sure that the user experience was as intuitive as possible, and when you put your time and energy into upgrading something, that you really **feel** the payoff. So, the difference between Incinerate 1 to Incinerate 3 is, ‘Yeah, I can set Carlos on fire... sorry’. With one or with three I can shoot a fireball out of my hand and set the room on fire. Really make it feel like when you spend your ADAM, you get something back.”

**NAG:** A small touch we appreciate is the new loading screen with the ‘50s jazz and Fun Facts about Rapture.

**Alyssa:** “It’s such a small thing. Loading screens, the last time, just had that little drone on them, with a progress bar. This time, we have some streaming music, just to get a little more of that *BioShock* flavour throughout the experience.”

**NAG:** Aside from staying true to the original, what do you consider your main focus going into *BioShock 2*?

**Alyssa:** “It depends on what angle you take that question from. One way to answer it is: if we’re going to make you a Big Daddy, you’ve got to feel like one. You have to have that feel... you’re just heavy,



and you have to be able to drill into a guy. You have to feel as hulky and as strong as a Big Daddy, but you can’t be as slow. We don’t want players to feel like, ‘Oh my god, is it going to be like the last level of *BioShock* the whole time?’”

**NAG:** If there’s one thing you’d want to tell our readers about *BioShock 2*, something that they might not read online or see in the videos, something they might miss, what would that be?

**Alyssa:** “That’s a good question. I think what I’d want everyone to know is almost what you’d expect from a *BioShock* game: never take anything for granted... the choices you make in *BioShock 2* really, **really** matter.

**NAG:** You’ll back that statement, once the game is released. Want to give out your e-mail address so people can complain if they felt the experience was too linear?

**Alyssa:** “[Laughs.] So, what did you like about Ryan Amusements?”

**NAG:** The premise itself was the most titillating: an amusement park trying to scare children away from the surface. You can blow people up in any game, but not every game has Rapture. The ‘stop and set up defences’ element doesn’t



appear enough in games – setting up turrets, defending from all angles.

**Alyssa:** “[Laughs.] I don’t like getting into fights, so when I know one is coming, I like to **really** prepare and set up defences. I like bees. They’re my favourite Plasmid from *BioShock*. I like putting bees on people and watching them run away. The opportunity the Big Daddy fights and Big Sister fights afford me, like preparing my battleground, I really like that a lot.”

**Carlos:** “I like to experiment. Try different things; see how much I can mess with the world, mess with the AIs. Just combining all the things, I can. That’s really awesome.”

**NAG:** And lastly, anything for the fans of the first game?

**Alyssa:** “We tried to listen to the people who liked the first game, and internalised a lot of the feedback we did get. Stuff like, ‘Hey, where’s my southpaw control flip.’”

**NAG:** So now you can swap the weapon-plasmid hand.

**Alyssa:** “Yeah, you can’t make everyone happy; but that one, we were happy to put in.” **NAG**



See kids; heavy metal  
IS the devil's music



SEEN AT RAGE



## Brütal Legend

Metal is dead

Genre → Action Adventure

PC 360 PS3 Wii PS2 PSP DS

**WHEN YOU'RE THE BEST** roadie in the business, you've got to make sure that you're supporting the best band in the business: the band with the hardest core, the tightest riffs, and the heaviest vocals. Sadly, in the case of Eddie Riggs (the roadie in question), he's in quite the opposite situation. Eddie is stuck with a wannabe hardcore band that's more interested in pulling big stunts and bigger crowds than they are with the music. Everything changes one evening, when a band member accidentally sets off a chain reaction of events. An ancient power is awoken and Eddie is transported into a parallel universe, which is built from the very essence of heavy metal. Bruised and confused, but otherwise feeling rather at home, he sets off to discover his destiny.

Eddie will have access to a number of weapons, spells and abilities to help him slay the countless hordes that are out to kill him. His trusty guitar, Clementine, has developed mystical properties in this alternate dimension, and has the ability to summon lightning and pyrotechnics. He'll also come across a massive battleaxe, known as The Separator, and a customisable hot rod called The Deuce. From what we've had a chance to experience, the action is fast paced and frantic, with Eddie churning out face-melting riffs and skull-splitting combination attacks with equal ease.

Eddie won't be alone on his quest. Along the way, he'll meet a number of allies who will join forces with him. Each ally provides Eddie with an extra,



He's clearly  
compensating  
for something



unique attack, although we've only had a chance to see Ophelia, who can be used to perform a Fastball special attack when thrown by Eddie. Later in the game, you'll also have the ability to control squads of head bangers, and use them to perform certain functions such as destroying statues of evil.

As this is a Tim Schafer (*Monkey Island*, *Full Throttle*, and *Psychonauts*) product, you can expect tons of humour. Eddie Riggs is voiced by Jack Black, and the game also features the voices of Tim Curry, Judas Priest's Rob Halford, Lita Ford of The Runaways, and Ozzy Osbourne. The game is a tribute to heavy metal, and is packed to the brim with obscure and obvious references, as well as a massive soundtrack selected by Schafer himself.

Much of the game's content is still secret at this stage (although it'll likely be on shelves by the time you read this). There's talk of a huge and varied multiplayer mode, which Schafer describes as "your typical head-to-head, battle of the bands scenario, but with axes." It will play like a simplified real-time strategy game, with support for team play.

*Brütal Legend* is looking fantastic at this stage and, frankly, we're just glad to see it with a shelf date. The game's production history has been chaotic, with changes in publishers and a few near-cancellations, but it's finally coming together. If you're a fan of heavy metal, Tim Schafer or action games that don't take things too seriously, this is definitely one to look out for.

**NAG**  
Geoff Burrows



# Start your Christmas list early this year



**GRAN TURISMO**  
ON PSP OUT NOW

**£349<sup>99</sup>**



**GTA CHINATOWN WARS**  
ON PSP OUT NOW

**£399<sup>99</sup>**



**JAK AND DEXTER THE LOST FRONTIER**  
ON PS2, PSP COMING SOON

**£299<sup>99</sup>**



**RESIDENT EVIL 5**  
ON PC, PS3, XBOX360 OUT NOW

**£449<sup>99</sup>**



**OPERATION FLASHPOINT**  
ON PC, PS3, XBOX360 OUT NOW

**£399<sup>99</sup>**



**ASSASSIN'S CREED 2**  
ON PC, PS3, XBOX360 COMING SOON

**£399<sup>99</sup>**



**MARIO & SONIC AT THE OLYMPICS**  
ON WII, DS OUT NOW

**£649<sup>99</sup>**



**WII FIT PLUS**  
STAND ALONE SOFTWARE R249.99  
OUT NOW

**BUNDLE £1299<sup>99</sup>**



**CALL OF DUTY MODERN WARFARE 2**  
ON PC, PS3, XBOX360, WII, DS COMING SOON

**£699<sup>99</sup>**



**GTA EPISODES FROM LIBERTY CITY**  
ON XBOX360 OUT NOW

**£429<sup>99</sup>**



**BAKUGAN**  
ON PS2, PS3, XBOX360, DS, WII OUT NOW

**£499<sup>99</sup>**



**LEGO INDIANA JONES 2**  
ON PC, PS2, PS3, XBOX360, PSP, WII, DS  
COMING SOON

**£299<sup>99</sup>**



**FIFA 10**  
ON PC, PS2, PS3, XBOX360, PSP, WII, DS  
OUT NOW

**£399<sup>99</sup>**



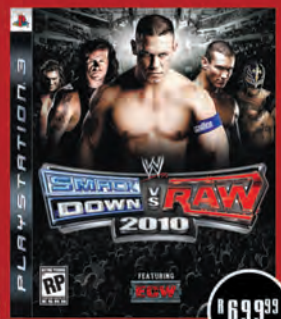
**TEKKEN 6**  
ON PS3, XBOX360, PSP COMING SOON

**£699<sup>99</sup>**



**AVATAR THE GAME**  
ON PC, PS3, XBOX360, PSP, WII, DS COMING SOON

**£699<sup>99</sup>**



**WWE SMACKDOWN VS RAW 2010**  
ON PS2, PS3, XBOX360, PSP, WII, DS OUT NOW

**£699<sup>99</sup>**

**OTHER RELEASES:** UNCHARTED 2: AMONG THIEVES ON PS3 OUT NOW NEED FOR SPEED NITRO ON WII, DS COMING SOON  
RABBIDS GO HOME ON WII, DS COMING SOON PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 2010 ON PC, PS3, XBOX360 OUT NOW PS2, PSP, WII COMING SOON LITTLE BIG PLANET ON PSP COMING SOON  
ASSASSIN'S CREED BLOODLINES ON PSP COMING SOON MAD KARTS OF MADAGASCAR ON PS3, XBOX360, WII, DS COMING SOON BRUTAL LEGEND ON PS3, XBOX360 OUT NOW  
BATTLEFRONT ELITE SQUADRON ON PSP, DS COMING SOON STARS WARS THE FORCE UNLEASHED: ULTIMATE SITH EDITION ON PS3, XBOX360 COMING SOON  
GUITAR HERO 5 ON PS2, PS3, XBOX360, WII OUT NOW DJ HERO ON PS2, PS3, XBOX360, WII COMING SOON BAND HERO ON PS2, PS3, XBOX360, WII COMING SOON  
SIMANIMALS AFRICA ON WII, DS COMING SOON EA SPORTS ACTIVE: MORE WORKOUTS ON WII COMING SOON THE SABOTEUR ON PC, PS3, XBOX360 COMING SOON  
DRAGON AGE ORIGINS ON PC, PS3, XBOX360 COMING THE SIMS 3 WORLD ADVENTURES EXPANSION PACK ON XBOX360, WII, DS COMING SOON LEFT 4 DEAD 2 ON PC, XBOX360 COMING SOON

PRE-ORDER GAMES ONLINE AT [WWW.LOOKANDLISTEN.CO.ZA](http://WWW.LOOKANDLISTEN.CO.ZA)

E&OE. Availability and prices subject to change at the discretion of the supplier.

DVD • CD • GAMES • MP3 • ACCESSORIES





This area is known as The Fade, an alternate dimension filled with demons, spirits and countless other dangers. Your eyes will deceive you here...



## Dragon Age: Origins

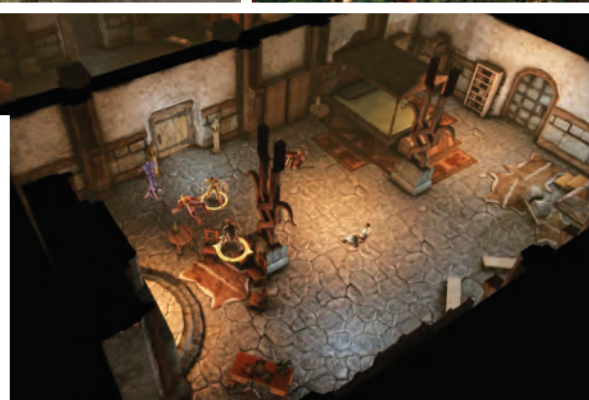
Pure RPG goodness

Genre → Action Adventure

PC 360 PS3 Wii PS2 PSP DS

**D**RAGON AGE: ORIGINS HAS been a long time coming. First announced at E3 2004, this spiritual successor to the *Baldur's Gate* series has had thousands of RPG lovers biting their nails, losing sleep and having anxiety attacks while waiting for the game to be released. Thankfully, by the time you read this, it should be on store shelves in a matter of weeks. We managed to get our paws on some pre-release code to keep us sated for the remaining wait.

*Dragon Age: Origins* promises to be a return to the style of play we were used to during the *Baldur's Gate* era of CRPGs, with some contemporary improvements added to the tried-and-trusted formula. Starting off with the usual character-creation screen, the game lets you choose the race, appearance (which is highly customisable), class, attributes and skills of the character that you plan to unleash on the game world. Three races are available to choose from: elf, dwarf and human. Warrior, mage and rogue are the three character classes on offer in the game, although dwarven characters cannot choose the mage class due to their natural resistance to magic. Character creation in *Dragon Age* differs in relation to other RPGs by allowing you to select the origin of your character. Is your character a dwarven commoner or was he born into dwarven nobility? Is your human character a noblewoman or did her magical prowess earn her a place among the Circle of Mages? This choice determines your starting gear and the predisposition of other characters towards you. It also determines your



character's starting area. As an example, the character that we created for this preview was a human mage. This required that we choose the 'Magi' origin that placed us in the Tower of Mages as an apprentice mage about to undergo 'The Harrowing', a rite of passage into the Circle of Mages. From here on out, the game threw all the usual RPG stuff at us – our character gained experience, levelled up, killed critters and engaged in countless conversations. The story in *Dragon Age* looks to be filled with depth and a wealth of choices for the player to make, each of which will influence the narrative. Character progression looks to be just as engaging, with different specialisations to choose, a wide variety

of spells for magic users and tons of different paths to take as your character gains experience. The party system is in place, with the player able to join forces with a number of different characters in the game to take on the Darkspawn (the greatest and most dangerous threat to the inhabitants of Ferelden – the location in which the game takes place).

Everything that players loved about the *Baldur's Gate* series seems to be making a return in *Dragon Age*. From what we experienced, we can safely say that if you're looking for a deep, compelling and rich RPG experience, then BioWare is likely to have you covered with *Dragon Age: Origins*. **NAG**

Dane Remendes



# LEFT 4 DEAD 2

L4D.COM



NEW FRIENDS. MORE ZOMBIES.  
**BETTER APOCALYPSE**

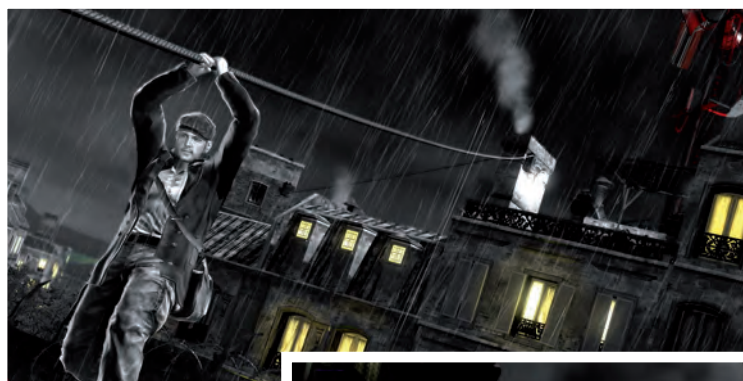
get infected Nov 20th



© 2009 Valve Corporation. Left 4 Dead, the Left 4 Dead logo, and Valve are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Valve Corporation in the United States and other countries. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies and are used under license from Microsoft. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.







## The Saboteur

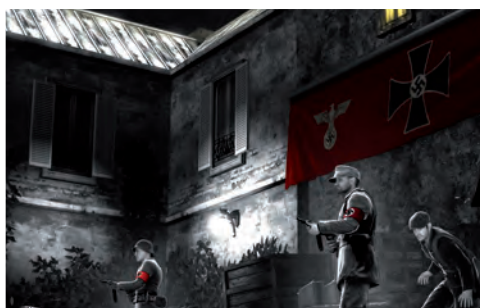
There's nothing like sitting down with a pint of Guinness after a gunfight

Genre → Sandbox Action Adventure

PC 360 PS3 Wii PS2 PSP DS

**T**HERE AREN'T MANY IRISH protagonists in the world of videogames. It's a shame, really. Sean Devlin's accent alone makes him come across as a swashbuckling tough guy, eager to bash some skulls, while deftly attempting to not spill the pint he's holding in his hand. Not only that, but he would manage to do this with a cigarette hanging precariously from his lips, as he sweet-talks a gorgeous burlesque\* dancer nearby. He'd also be playing pinball with one foot. That's Sean Devlin, the main character in *The Saboteur*. He's an Irish race car driver in Paris who happens to be around when the Nazis roll into town and start raining on the Parisian parade. Initially he doesn't care because the Nazis don't touch his stash of Guinness. When the alcohol well starts running dry, however, the Germans start rounding up all the alcohol in the city, and the tiny IRA member trapped inside Sean is unleashed in a flurry of explosions and body parts. All right, I made that all up. But that's how I would have envisioned this game's plot unfolding. Truthfully, Sean is roped into a war that he wants no part in when the Nazis start terrorising and murdering the people close to him.

All of this leads up to the gameplay of *The Saboteur*, which we got a chance to mess around with during the madness that was rAge 2009. It plays like a mix of *Assassin's Creed*, *Grand Theft Auto* and *The Boondock Saints* (if *The Boondock Saints* were a videogame). You may have gathered (based on all the talk of Nazis) that the game is set during World War II, but it's not a typical WWII shooter. Sean's



not out to end the war – all he wants is revenge. You help him with this by accepting missions from various contacts scattered across a scaled-down version of Paris. Sean can hijack cars, grab weapons, steal Nazi uniforms (to access restricted areas), wield a variety of WWII-era weaponry, and generally wreak havoc around the Nazi-occupied city. There's plenty of acrobatic tomfoolery, as Sean is able to clamber his way up pretty much anything in sight. If you've played *Grand Theft Auto*, *The Saboteur* will be instantly familiar, but expect to be pleasantly surprised by the features unique to this WWII take on sandbox games. **NAG**

Dane Remendes



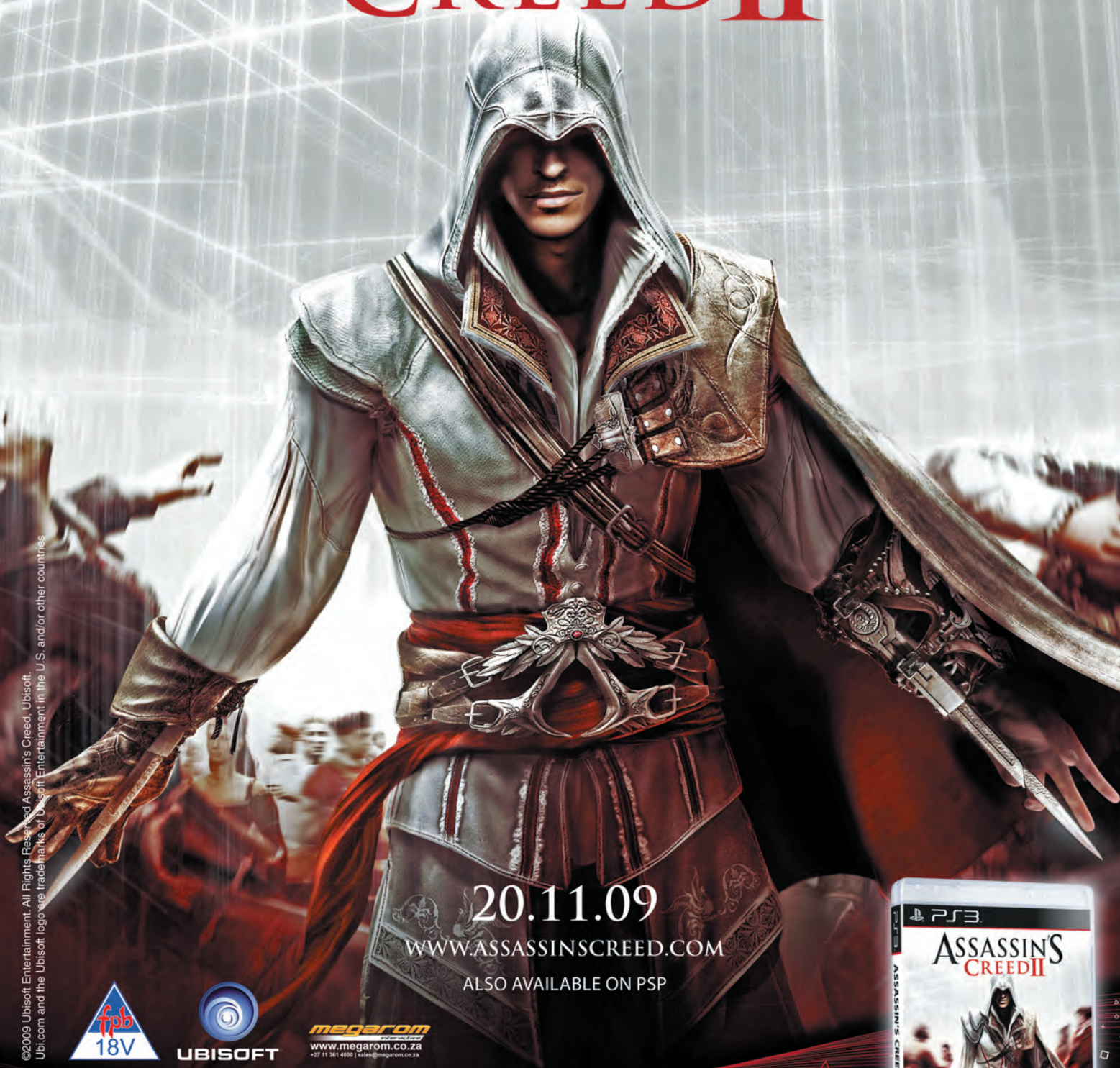
## WtF is WtF?

"WtF" (Will to Fight) is a neat, little gameplay mechanic in *The Saboteur* that details the people's morale in whatever area you're currently visiting. Areas in the city, which have a strong French Resistance presence (thanks to your dirty work) and low Nazi presence, will have high morale (or Will to Fight – see where this is going?). In these areas, the game world is in full colour. In areas where the opposite is true, the game world will be devoid of colour: everything shifts to black-and-white hues. WtF affects your movement through the city, because the lower the WtF, the greater the number of Nazi patrols that frequent the area. The higher the WtF, the more likely it is for citizens and resistance fighters to come to your aid in a fire fight.

\* Nice word, Ed.



# ASSASSIN'S CREED II



20.11.09

[WWW.ASSASSINSCREED.COM](http://WWW.ASSASSINSCREED.COM)

ALSO AVAILABLE ON PSP

©2009 Ubisoft Entertainment. All Rights Reserved. Assassin's Creed, Ubisoft, Ubi.com and the Ubisoft logo are trademarks of Ubisoft Entertainment in the U.S. and/or other countries.



**megarom**  
www.megarom.co.za  
+27 11 361 4800 | sales@megarom.co.za



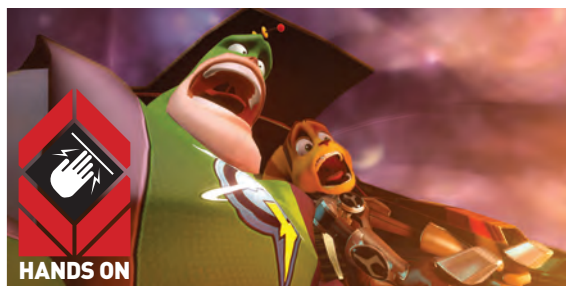
PS3

PlayStation 3





Developer→ Insomniac Games Publisher→ Sony Computer Entertainment  
Web→ [www.us.playstation.com/ratchetandclank/a-crack-in-time.html](http://www.us.playstation.com/ratchetandclank/a-crack-in-time.html) Release Date→ Q4 2009



## Ratchet & Clank Future: A Crack in Time

Have hover boots, will travel...

Genre→ Action-Adventure Platformer  
PC 360 **PS3** Wii PS2 PSP DS

**WITH ALL THE NOISE** being made about the upcoming releases of *God of War III* and *Uncharted 2*, the next two 'must-have' games for the PS3, you may have missed the news that there's another title on the way that also makes it worthwhile to finally go out and buy Sony's latest console.

The second instalment in the series on the PS3, *Ratchet & Clank Future: A Crack in Time* picks up the story where *Tools of Destruction* (and the PSP episode *Quest for Booty*) left off. Clank has been kidnapped by a race of aliens called the Zoni at the bidding of arch-villain Dr Nefarious, who is trying to control time, and Ratchet embarks on a mission to rescue his friend. Don't worry if you haven't played any of the previous games, though. Players are brought up to speed on the storyline via flashbacks and interviews with the duo's bumbling sidekick, Captain Qwark.

The game dynamic is very similar to the other titles in the series, and this

is a good thing because it's incredibly enjoyable. There are hordes of enemies, tons of crates to smash and, of course, a huge arsenal of outrageous weapons. The biggest difference in *A Crack in Time* is that Ratchet and Clank have been split up and don't fight together. Players control them individually on their own levels as the story progresses.

In the past, Ratchet had been able to jump and glide with the assistance of Clank and the propeller attached to his back. In Clank's place, Ratchet gets a pair of hover boots that let him jet around levels, jump off ramps and slide on railings. Given the size of the levels and their nonlinear layout, having the ability to get around quickly is a huge benefit. While Ratchet's levels are largely action-orientated, when playing as Clank, the player is presented with a series of *Braid*-styled time-manipulation puzzles. Contraptions throughout the levels allow Clank to record versions of himself, which can be replayed later to help him advance. For example, Clank can record himself standing on a switch to open a door while the real-time version runs through it.

Perhaps the biggest new bit of gaming in *A Crack in Time* comes via Ratchet's spaceship. Instead of a simple cut-scene warping Ratchet from one planet to the next, players now get to fly around in open space, fight other ships and explore moons, while hunting for hidden items and collectables. It's a nice touch, and it adds an almost RPG-like element to the game with all the treasure-hunting side quests.

The entire game is exceptionally well put together and it gives the feeling of playing a CG-animated movie. The series' trademark laugh-out-loud humour and terrific voice acting drive the story, and the non-stop crate-smashing, alien-blasting action is absolutely addictive. You won't want to put this one down.

**NAG**  
**Chris Bistline**





www.avg.com



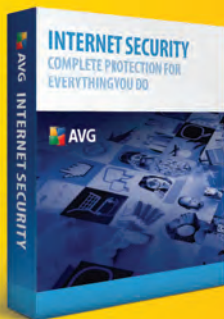
# The Ultimate in Protection



ANTI-VIRUS

FIREWALL

IDENTITY PROTECTION™



AVG Internet Security 9.0

## The choice of over 80 million people world-wide, is now available through Incredible Connection in South Africa.

When it comes to Internet security, over 80 million people world-wide trust AVG to keep them protected. Home users and small and medium businesses have found that AVG security products not only give them the confidence that they are safe from Internet threats but also enable them to get more done.

With AVG Internet Security 9.0, our most advanced protection, customers get a worry-free online experience every time. While surfing, shopping, downloading, banking or searching the web, the multiple layers of protection provided by AVG Internet Security 9.0 mean that customers don't have to worry about identity theft, spam or viruses. And it'll even prevent them from accidentally visiting harmful sites.

Check out why it should be your choice:

**FASTER** Scanning time reduced by up to 50%.

**SAFER** 50% reduction in firewall alerts.

**EASIER** Easy installation and simple, non-intrusive operation.

Ask your retailer for AVG, today!



info@avgsecurity.co.za



+27 (0) 214874640

AVG now available across Incredible Connection stores in:

• ALBERTON • ATTERBURY • BAYSIDE • BLOEMFONTEIN • BLUE ROUTE • BOKSBURG • CANAL WALK • CAPE GATE • CAPE TOWN CBD • CAVENDISH • CENTURION • CLEARWATER  
• CRESTA • EAST LONDON • EAST RAND RETAIL PARK • EASTGATE • EDENVALE • FOURWAYS • GABORONE • GATEWAY • GEORGE • GREENACRES • GREENSTONE  
• HEMINGWAYS • HIGHVELD • KEMPTON FESTIVAL MALL • KIMBERLEY • KLERKSDORP • KOLONNADE • MALL @ REDS • MATLOSANA • MENLYN • NELSPRUIT • NORTHGATE  
• PAARL • PAVILION • PIETERMARITZBURG • POLOKWANE • PORT ELIZABETH • RICHARDS BAY • ROSEBANK • RUSTENBURG • SANDTON • SOMERSET WEST • SPRINGFIELD  
• THE GROVE • TYGERVALLEY • V&A WATERFRONT • VAAL MALL • VEREENIGING • WEST RAND CROSSING • WESTGATE • WINDHOEK • WITBANK • WONDERPARK • WOODMEAD



## The Reviewers

**Do you use Twitter? We do. Well, some of us tweet. The rest look on in disdain, too ignorant to comprehend what Twitter is for, too old to understand the appeal, or too stuck-up to accept the benefits of the system. LOL!**

**Miktar Dracon:**  
Currently recovering from Swine Flu, playing Wii games that nobody cares about, and drinking Mountain Dew.



**Walt Pretorius:** I'm busy making buttons! They're so round and awesome, and I can put any picture I want on them. Hmm, booby buttons.



**Dane Remendes:**  
Ha, ha, Chris Jnr's PlayStation 3 broke. That's what he gets for buying a PlayStation 3. Ha, ha.



**Tarryn van der Byl:**  
Chainsaws at dawn! 25K Gamerscore b\*\*ches! I'm a disgrace to the gaming world. Sad panda.



**Chris Bistline:** I'm pretty sure that when I sleep, my dogs are conspiring with my children to have me murdered.



**Michael James:**  
Who's up for a "no pants" party? Anyone? Hello, is this thing on? What does this button do? Oh, that dele...



**Adam Liebman:**  
Ha, ha, ha! Lemur Voltron! <http://www.heyokay.com/images/lemur%20voltron.jpg> LOL!



**Geoff Burrows:**  
I just don't get it. When 'running' full screen, the buttons are there! Not full screen, they're gone! WTF?



**Alex Jelagin:**  
So, apparently the LHC keeps breaking because it's being sabotaged by the future. Rad.



## Anatomy of a Review

## A quick guide to the NAG Reviews section

**VITAL INFO:** Who made it, who's putting it on shelves and where to find more information

**GAME NAME:** It'd be a bit confusing if we left this bit out. Now it comes with a short summary, too!

**BOX OUTS:** More good stuff. Just in a box.

**Review**  
Developer: Capcom Publisher: Capcom Distributor: No Man's Game Web: www.streetfighter.com

**Street Fighter IV**  
Don't call it a comeback or retro revival this is fighting redefined

**THE REVIEW FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE NEVER PLAYED STREET FIGHTER**  
If you don't need to know anything about Street Fighter or the fighting game genre to enjoy SFIV, Capcom's special guide to newcomers is right. SFIV is the most accessible entry point to both the series and the genre.

**GENRE AND PLATFORMS:** What kind of game is it, and what platforms does it come on. All available platforms are in white, the one we reviewed it on is in yellow.

**CAPTIONS:** A picture's worth a thousand words. Here's 20 or so...

**SCREENSHOTS AND ARTWORK:** The game looks something like this, presumably

**THE SCORE**  
Breaking down the box

**AWARD:** Is this game worthy of our praise? If so, it gets an award. See details below.

**MULTIPLAYER ICONS:** How many players per copy, players per server, and players in co-op, respectively

**PLUS/MINUS:** What we liked, and what we didn't, in concise bullet-point format

**THE BOTTOM LINE:** Here's where we condense the entire review into 20 words or less. Because reading is hard...

**AGE RATING:** Let's see some ID, son

**SCORE:** Further reducing our bottom line to a number out of 100

**Editor's Choice Award**  
If a game bears this award, then it rocks. It does everything right - pure and simple. We don't hand these out every issue.

**Must Play Award**  
Essential playing for fans of the genre. These awards aren't as rare as the Editor's Choice award, but if you see one, take note.

**Pony Award**  
This isn't an award anyone can be proud of. If a game gets this award, then it's rubbish and you should avoid it like moss on a sandwich. We keep it only for the best garbage.



## What We're Playing

Here are the top 20 games we're currently playing in the NAG office

| #  | GAME NAME                          |
|----|------------------------------------|
| 1  | Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare MP  |
| 2  | Call of Duty: World at War Zombies |
| 3  | Aion                               |
| 4  | Elements                           |
| 5  | Batman: Arkham Asylum              |
| 6  | Battlefield 1943                   |
| 7  | Dawn of War II                     |
| 8  | Deus EX (HDP)                      |
| 9  | DiRT 2                             |
| 10 | Fallen Sword                       |
| 11 | Far Cry 2                          |
| 12 | Gears of War 2                     |
| 13 | GTA: Vice City                     |
| 14 | Halo 3: ODST                       |
| 15 | Marvel: Ultimate Alliance 2        |
| 16 | Muramasa: The Demon Blade          |
| 17 | Puzzle Kingdoms                    |
| 18 | Rock Band 2                        |
| 19 | Sam & Max: Beyond Time and Space   |
| 20 | Wolfenstein                        |

## Distributors

|                           |                |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| Apex Interactive          | [011] 796-5040 |
| Asbis                     | [011] 848-7000 |
| ASUS SA                   | [011] 783-5450 |
| Axiz                      | [011] 237-7000 |
| Comstar                   | [011] 314-5812 |
| Comstek                   | 0860 600 557   |
| Core Group                | [087] 940-3000 |
| Corex                     | [011] 655-8800 |
| Cosmic Comics             | [011] 476-9640 |
| Drive Control Corporation | [011] 201-8927 |
| EA South Africa           | [011] 516-8300 |
| Esquire                   | 0861 700 000   |
| Eurobyte                  | [011] 234-0142 |
| Foxcomp                   | [011] 912-6300 |
| Frontosa                  | [011] 466-0038 |
| Incredible Connection     | 0860 011 700   |
| Intel Corporation         | [011] 806-4530 |
| Legend Memory             | [011] 314-0817 |
| Logitech SA               | [011] 656-3375 |
| Look & Listen             | [011] 467-3717 |
| Megarom                   | [011] 361-4800 |
| Microsoft                 | 0860 225 567   |
| MiDigital                 | [011] 723-1800 |
| MobileG                   | [021] 982-4606 |
| Net4 Solutions            | [082] 490-1510 |
| Nology                    | [012] 657-1317 |
| Nu Metro Interactive      | [011] 340-3000 |
| Pinnacle                  | [011] 265-3000 |
| Rectron                   | [011] 203-1000 |
| Sahara                    | [011] 542-1000 |
| Samsung                   | 0860 726 7864  |
| Sapphire ATI              | [044] 384-0225 |
| Sonic Informed            | [011] 314-5800 |
| Ster-Kinekor Games        | [011] 445-7700 |
| Syntech                   | 0861 274 244   |
| TVR                       | [011] 807-1390 |

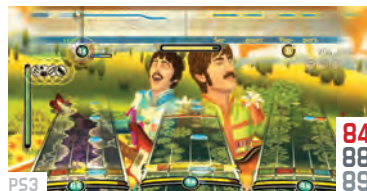
If your company isn't listed here,  
phone NAG on [011] 704-2679

## Web Scores

How do our scores compare to everyone else's? We've provided scores from Metacritic and Game Rankings for reference.

NAG // Metacritic // Game Rankings

### THE BEATLES: ROCK BAND



PS3

84  
88  
89

### GUITAR HERO 5



360

90  
85  
86

### NEED FOR SPEED: SHIFT



360

90  
83  
85

### HALO 3: ODST



360

87  
83  
85

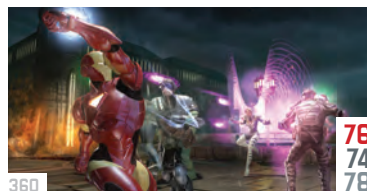
### WET



360

72  
69  
71

### MARVEL: ULTIMATE ALLIANCE 2



360

76  
74  
78

### RISEN



360

69  
58  
58

# digitalSAonline

South Africa's Online Store for Gamers

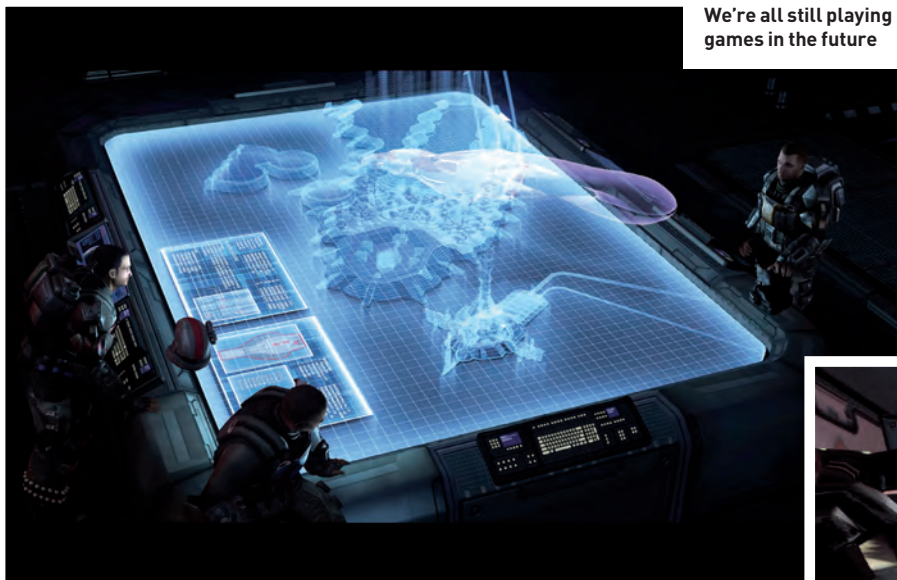


## Triple Your Vision With Eyefinity

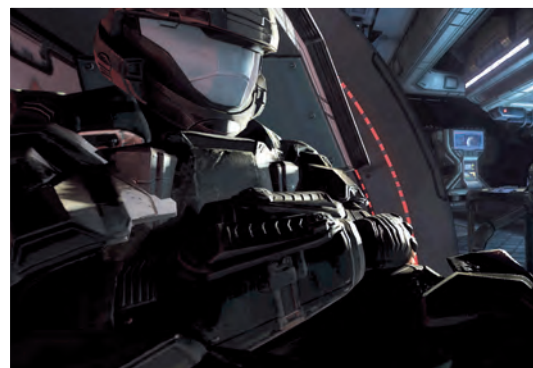


www.digitalSAonline.co.za  
Call us today: 011 828 5946





We're all still playing games in the future



## Halo 3: ODST

Going on safari is a totally different thing in the future

Genre→ First-Person Shooter

PC 360 PS3 Wii PS2 PSP DS

**NEW MOMBASA, 2552.** THE United Nations Space Command interstellar planetary colonisation programme has gone all sorts of wrong. Obviously, the R&D guys over there didn't watch science fiction movies or something, because nobody seems to have anticipated the (totally inevitable) incursion of an inscrutably hostile alien force pledged (totally inevitably) to the extermination of humanity. Realising this egregious oversight, the UNSC begins quickly dismantling all their UNSC-branded junk floating in space in a desperate bid to avoid the Covenant (the particular inscrutably hostile alien force) locating Earth. Totally inevitably, this doesn't quite work out either, and a gargantuan Covenant carrier has rocked up in close orbit over African megacity New Mombasa (not Los Angeles, so maybe that's half a point to the UNSC R&D guys), shooting lasers and stuff. The UNSC responds by scrambling six of their spec-ops Orbital Drop Shock Troopers, and chucking them onto the Covenant carrier to break things and shoot alien scum. Just as all this is going on, however, the Covenant carrier jumps into one of those time-space teleportation extra-dimensions that haven't been invented yet, and the incoming ODSTs are caught in the slipstream and separated from one another as they hit the city. This isn't an entirely catastrophic turn of events, though: it seems that the Office of Naval Intelligence operative in the team had other plans for the mission, which apparently didn't include going anywhere near the Covenant carrier anyway.

So you're the Rookie, or Lance Corporal Rookie. What you're doing with all your inexperience on such an obviously crucial operation isn't important, and why you're the Rookie when your comrades include a Private First Class and another Lance Corporal isn't important either. This is the future, and things work differently here. Besides, there's all that convenient on-the-job training in your first mission, anyway. See that Opticon health station over there? It replenishes your, um, bio stuff and makes you 100% better again. Got that? Great, now go kill things. Being a UNSC ODST is so much easier than it looked in the recruitment brochures.

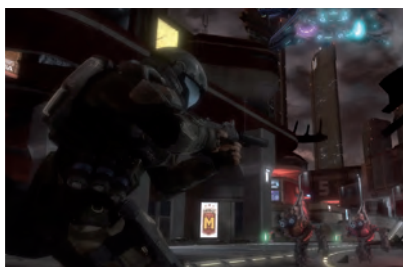
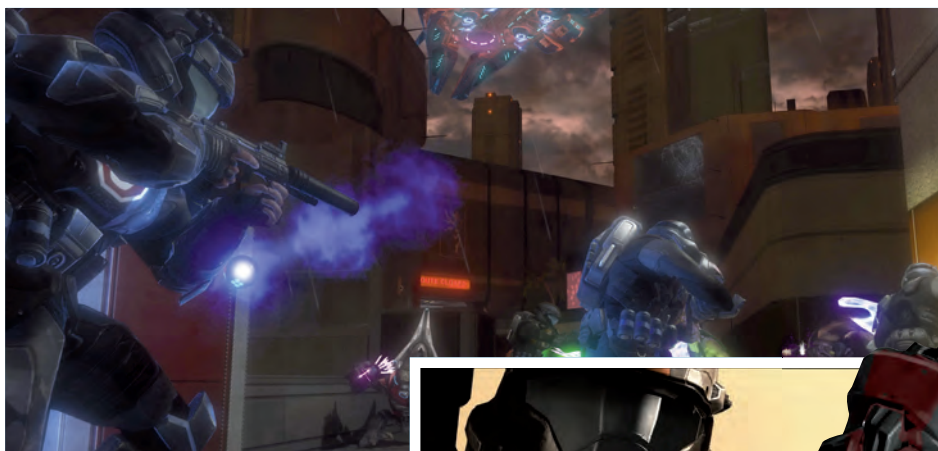
The first thing that's going to hit you about *Halo 3: ODST* is that it looks absolutely nothing like *Halo*. The game starts at night, and it's a night looking nothing so much like an abandoned soundstage from *Blade Runner*: We've got a maze of desolate city streets, strewn about with the debris of invasion and panicked evacuation, their fibreglass and steel facades licked by neon displays. Those neon displays, if you're the observant recon type (and you are), are warning displays from the city's resident AI, the Superintendent, and will indicate if there's any trouble up ahead. Okay, okay, I admit I totally didn't even notice it on my first play through, so I'm doing you all a favour and telling you about it now, because it makes your job quite a bit easier. That's because unlike the helter-skelter run-and-gun game mechanic of previous *Halo* titles, this one comes with a big, red advisory don't. You're not packing Master Chief's magic Improbable Plate of Recharging +5, and once you start taking damage, you start dying hard and fast. It's often a much better idea to creep around







**NAG FACT:** Alien bum gas is six times more explosive than human bum gas



enemies than engage them head on, especially if you're going it solo. Danger isn't the only thing the Superintendent likes telling you about, though. There are 30 collectible audio logs spread around the place, and these signs usually (if somewhat cryptically) point you towards them. Pay attention, Rookie, because finding these things has some serious benefits...

While the ODSTs aren't geared up with the Spartan MJOLNIR armour (that's the magic recharging stuff), and can't dual-wield weapons, they've got a few tricks of their own. Well, a magic visor and extra pockets for grenades. Activating this magic visor (ingeniously dubbed Visual Intelligence System, Reconnaissance, or VISR) provides low-light environmental information, designating friendly forces

(allies, weapons, and dead things that aren't out to get you) in green and blue, and 'non-friendlies' (everything else) in red. It's not much use during the daytime flashback sequences, but absolutely indispensable in the dark. The VISR is also used to access GPS and mission information and lay waypoints. ODSTs are also issued with the new MS7 silenced submachine gun (pretty much the same as in *Halo 3*, but with a scope and massive kickback), and the M6C/SOCOM silenced pistol (also equipped with a scope, and the working ODST's number one choice for Grunt headshots).

The next thing that's going to hit you about *Halo 3: ODST* is that the campaign plays out nothing like *Halo*. Instead of rushing from one sector to the next, punching Elites with a Needler, the story

## Get locked, get loaded

Know about the Horde in *Gears of War 2*, Nazi Zombies in *Call of Duty: World at War*, and the Survival mode in *Left 4 Dead*? Well, they've got it all in *Halo 3: ODST* too – sort of. The premise is very much the same: waves of enemies spawn, you kill them, and the whole process starts again. Of course, Bungie has 'lobbed' in a few *Halo*-flavoured twists. The mode plays out as five waves in a round, and three rounds in a set. There are infinite sets and a bonus round at the end of each. Every round in a set becomes progressively more difficult, as Skulls (modifiers) are activated, making enemies throw more grenades, for example. On top of this, all players in the game share a pool of extra lives, and once they're up, it's game over. Just as in regular *Halo 3* multiplayer, skilled play such as headshots, double- and triple-kills, and such are awarded medals and bonus points. The idea is to get as high a score as possible, with the par set at 200,000. It's also much, much harder than it sounds, and you're all going to die horribly just after cracking 82,000 – true story.







unfolds as a sequence of flashbacks. Having crash-landed in the middle of New Mombasa, your ad hoc mission objective is to find out what happened to all your ODST chums. Since this is the future and everything, every ODST is equipped with an emergency transponder that somehow envelops all their stuff. So, you trip around the city, looking for any evidence of your squad mates' passing. Locating a bashed-up sniper rifle dangling from a cable overhead, for example, whisks you off to several hours previously, and parks you in the boots of ODST sharpshooter, Romeo. Ultimately, you'll put together the bits and pieces of the story of each ODST, and how they contrived, with much intrepid adventure, to get back together and escape the doomed planet. It sounds kind of like an episode of *Lost*, because it is, except without the crashed plane and the polar bears and stuff. It also works out so well that it's sort of mystifying that nobody's done this kind of thing in a game before. Returning abruptly to the sombre night of the Rookie's city levels, after manoeuvring a Scorpion tank through a gauntlet of Covenant fortifications

and about a zillion Wraiths, makes for a compelling 'counterpoint' play dynamic.

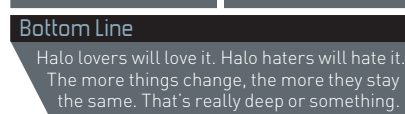
It's hard to fault the campaign. The mission structure is well paced and varied enough to keep things dialled up to 'exhilarating' (the Banshee aerial combat level over downtown is a highlight), and only really stumbles in the decidedly bland, copy-paste penultimate assignment. The voice acting, featuring a bunch of the *Firefly* cast, is absolutely superb, as is the music (as usual). All this, supported by smart narrative design makes it – for me, at least (HERETIC) – a better campaign than *Halo 3*'s. It's just a bit on the short side: I completed a solo run on Heroic difficulty in under seven hours or so, and around five hours in two-way Legendary co-op\*. With no points-based metagame included, there's not very much replay incentive beyond wrapping up your audio log collection or outstanding campaign Achievements, or doing it with friends. Of course, the inclusion of the Firefight mode and *Halo 3* multiplayer goes some way to mitigating this. Prepare to drop? Definitely.

Tarryn van der Byl

## I get by with a little help from my friends

On a single console, you can play the campaign in two-way split-screen co-op. With a LIVE account and Gold subscription, you can take the fight online in four-way campaign co-op. You can mash up two-way split-screen with additional players over LIVE, and as with previous *Halo* games, that second account can be signed in as a guest with no Gold subscription (so take the opportunity to convince your doubting

PC zealot friends that Xbox 360 gaming is obviously the future, etc.). Firefight is pretty much exactly the same. *ODST* also ships with the complete, original *Halo 3* multiplayer package on a second disc, including all DLC maps released since launch. Just as before, this can be rocked in four-way split-screen. You can also haul three guest accounts with you onto LIVE matchmaking to get shot at by 12-year-olds with potty mouths.



AVAILABLE AT  
Look & Listen  
FutabaPans



\* Yes, but you're a special case, Ed.



"NEVERSOFT CONTINUES  
TO COMMAND ITS ROCK  
ARMADA WITH SKILL  
AND JUDGEMENT"

EUROGAMER

# GUITAR HERO 5

ROCK ANY WAY YOU WANT with Arctic Monkeys,  
Coldplay, The Killers, Kings Of Leon, Muse, The Rolling Stones,  
The White Stripes, plus 76 other iconic artists.



**ANY INSTRUMENT\* YOU CHOOSE**  
Shred with 4 guitars or any combination of  
instruments, you choose.



**PLAY WITH YOUR FRIENDS**  
All-New Party Play mode allows you to easily  
jump in/jump out of songs at any time.



**TRY THE ULTIMATE CHALLENGE**  
New RockFest mode tests your skills with 4  
players locally, or up to 8 players online.

**PRE ORDER NOW AT [GH5.GUITARHERO.COM](http://GH5.GUITARHERO.COM)**

**OUT NOW!**

Download over 200 tracks direct to your console, visit [GUITARHERO.COM](http://GUITARHERO.COM) for details



PlayStation 2

PLAYSTATION 3



ACTIVISION

© 2009 Activision Publishing, Inc. Guitar Hero and Activision are registered trademarks of Activision Publishing, Inc. Patents pending. '2', 'PlayStation', 'PLAYSTATION' and are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Trademarks are property of their respective owners. Wii is a trademark of Nintendo. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies. All other trademarks and trade names are the properties of their respective owners. All rights reserved.  
ACTIVISION AUTHORIZES USE OF THIS GUITAR HERO GAME ONLY IN COMBINATION WITH GUITAR HERO CONTROLLERS PROVIDED BY ACTIVISION OR OTHER AUTHORIZED CONTROLLERS OR, IF APPLICABLE, STANDARD GAMEPAD CONTROLLERS PROVIDED WITH THE GAME CONSOLE. ANY OTHER USE IS PROHIBITED AND NO OTHER LICENSE, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, IS GRANTED.

\*Any reference to instruments - Guitars, Drums, or Microphones - refers to Guitar Hero controllers. Online features not available on PlayStation3/2

**megarom**  
www.megarom.co.za  
+27 11 361 4800 | sales@megarom.co.za

activision.com



It's not as hippy as it looks.  
Okay, maybe it is.



### The guitar

While the basic premise behind the *Guitar Hero* and *Rock Band* series is the same, there are many differences between the guitars used. There are five additional frets lower down the neck. These are similar to the slider bar from *GH: World Tour*, but are only particularly useful during guitar solos. During the rest of the song, these five buttons merely duplicate the top frets. The strum bar is a bit of a double-edged sword when compared to that of *Guitar Hero*. There's no distinct clicking noise when the bar is pressed down or up, which means it's a lot quieter. But because there's no click, it's sometimes possible to miss a note if the bar isn't pushed sufficiently up or down. The guitar does have one very useful feature: auto-calibration. LCD TV users will know that the lag between audio, visuals and the console itself can cause some irritating problems while playing. This normally requires manual calibration of the game, but not here. All you need to do is to hold up the guitar to the TV set while the auto-calibration beeps and flickers, and the game will take care of the details.

## The Beatles: Rock Band

Rock 'n' Roll Music

Genre→ Rhythm

PC 360 **PS3** Wii PS2 PSP DS

**F**OR SOME TIME NOW, we locals have been deprived of a very important game. This game is *Rock Band*, which has only recently landed on our shores through EA. *Rock Band* was developed by Harmonix, the team that first developed the *Guitar Hero* series, which was handed over to Neversoft from *GHIII* onwards. *Rock Band* is what they have been up to all this time. However, if you want the *Rock Band* instruments, you'll need to buy this particular part of the series, since the instruments are virtually identical to those found in *Rock Band 2*. For that

reason, EA isn't bringing in the regular set (at least, not yet).

In *The Beatles: Rock Band*, you take on the 'roles' of music's most iconic rock band; from their last appearance at The Cavern in 1963, through their turbulent career, and eventually culminating on the rooftops of Apple Corps in 1969. The game serves as a massive fan service and, since it only features Beatles songs, is Beatlemania in its most concentrated form. From their floppy-haired, bowl-cut days through to the long-haired, bell bottom-wearing hippy tunes that made them so famous, every nuance of their change, visually and musically, is captured in detail. What results is a real sense of 'journey' as you watch the group

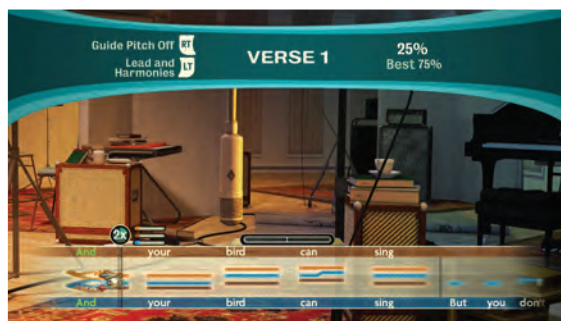
grow: their music shifts from youthful and upbeat, to downright trippy, and eventually lands somewhere between sombre and depressing.

Everything in this journey is aided by the spectacular visuals. From the intro to the transitional videos between chapters, everything looks and feels like something The Beatles would put together were they around today to produce their own videogame. As you move deeper into the group's drug-induced song writing (particularly during the production of *Abbey Road*), the visuals become appropriately 'far out'. During *Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds*, the group travels into outer space; and *Octopus's Garden* does, as you'd expect, see the boys performing



## The drum kit

The biggest difference between the drum kit in *Guitar Hero* and *Rock Band* is that this drum kit only uses four pads, as opposed to *GH*'s three pads and two cymbals. You may think that this makes *RB*'s drumming easier or less 'realistic', but it's not the case. The note patterns are, arguably, more entertaining than those in *GH*. As a result, you're kept as busy playing four pads as you would playing five. The biggest benefit of this kit over that of *GH* is the fixed kick pedal, which is bound to the struts that connect the stands. This means that the pedal can't slip and slide around during play, which is a problem faced by anyone who's tried to play *GH* on a rug. The kits for *RB* and *GH* are 'cross compatible'. Using the *GH* kit in *Rock Band* simply disables one of the cymbals, and the *Guitar Hero* developers were kind enough to program the game to adapt to a four-pad kit with a unique, four-lane note highway - if you use the *RB* drums.



Just in case you weren't sure where to look.

## The mic

It's a USB microphone; there really isn't much to it. You can even break out those *SingStar* or *Lips* microphones that you pretend you don't own, and they'll work with *The Beatles*. *The Beatles* does manage to do something quite interesting, however. Up to three vocalists can sing together, with separate tracks for each microphone, or a single track that will require vocal harmonies from all three singers to nab those high scores. To complement this idea, the bundle includes a full-size (and pretty durable-feeling) microphone stand, so you can (attempt to) strum and sing at the same time.

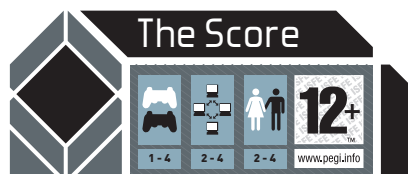
on the ocean floor. It's... well, it's weird, but any Beatles fan will be able to identify with the style immediately. If you're not a huge fan, then you're still left with some rather colourful and entertaining visuals that will make *The Beatles: Rock Band* as much fun to watch as it is to play. There's also a ton of extras to unlock, including photos with descriptions and a few videos of the lads.

In terms of actual gameplay, *The Beatles* lands a little short. There's the story mode, quick play (with all of the songs unlocked from the beginning), as well as two competitive modes. Aside from the harmonics system, there's nothing particularly special about this iteration in the series (gameplay-wise, at

least). On average, the songs are pretty easy: if you can 'cope' with the hard difficulty in *GH*, then you'll find most of the songs here quite doable on expert).

There are likely two types who will buy this game: newcomers to the *Rock Band* series looking to pick up the whole kit, and Beatles fans who have been craving this game since it was first announced. While the latter will find seventh heaven here, the former won't be disappointed either. It's a good rhythm game with some catchy tunes that everyone can sing along to. If you really don't like the idea of a Beatles-only game, you'll probably buy *Rock Band 2* as a standalone, and simply treat this game as a track pack. **NAG**

Geoff Burrows



**Plus**  
+ Great visuals  
+ It's just The Beatles

**Minus**  
- A bit easy  
- It's just The Beatles

## Bottom Line

It's perfect for Beatles fans, and should provide plenty of entertainment for everyone else.







The new visual style in all its glory



## Guitar Hero 5

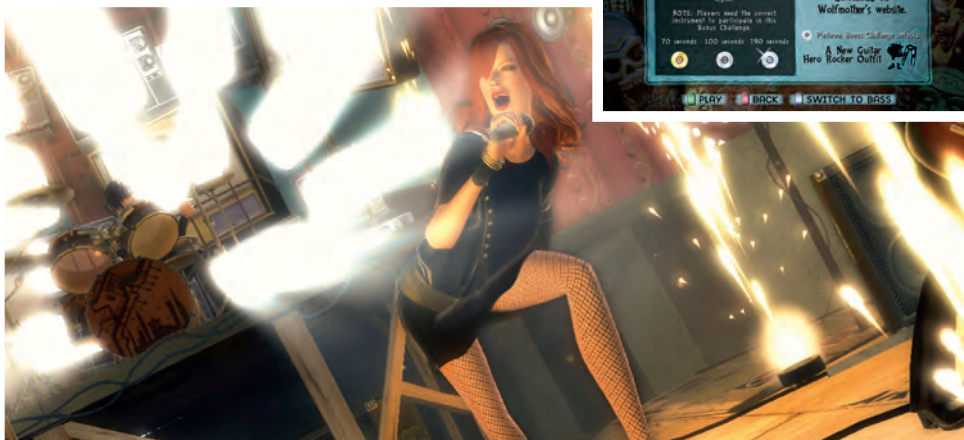
The second most enjoyable thing to do while drunk

Genre→ Music

PC 360 PS3 Wii PS2 PSP DS

**I**F YOU THOUGHT 2009 was going to pass by without another *Guitar Hero* game to accompany it, you were very wrong. *Guitar Hero 5* brings with it the usual assortment of new tracks and new features, together with a new look and the awesome new Party Play mode. Easily one of *GH5*'s best new features, Party Play unleashes the game's full potential as a party game. Every time you start up *GH5*, the game randomly selects a track from the 85 songs in its set list (all of which are unlocked for Party Play) and starts playing the song in the background – almost like a virtual music video. From here, you and your friends can connect any combination of controllers (like two drum sets or four guitars) on the fly and start jamming to the song, without needing to sign in with your profile. Things such as difficulty, which hand you prefer to use and playlists can be altered at any time during the song, without the need to pause or restart your rock session. Players can drop out at any time to get back to their drinking binge. It's a brilliant new feature that makes the game much easier to just pick up and play on impulse.

The Career mode is still available for wannabe rock stars/bands. Like *Guitar Hero: Metallica*, *GH5* uses your overall star rating to determine your progression through the Career mode, which takes place at a number of different venues that are unlocked as you play. Each song played in the career mode also boasts challenges (either for specific instruments or for all band members) that, when completed, will unlock stuff like new outfits for the Rock Star Creator.



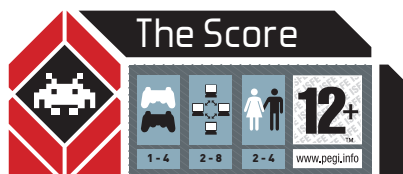
The Career mode hasn't changed much, but it's still a lot of fun to grab a few buddies and jam your way through it as a digital band. Other game modes on offer fall into party modes such as 'Do or Die', which forces players who miss three consecutive notes in a section of a song to sit out until the next section.

*GH5*'s new visual style drifts away from the cartoonish look of the previous titles in the series. The game sports a more realistic take on things. Personal preference will decide whether you like this new look or long for the caricatures of old, but we think the new visuals are very impressive. The new track-information window lets you gauge the difficulty of each instrument for your chosen song (as well as the length of the song, artist information and the like), and playlists can now extend beyond the limit of six songs, which was in place in *World Tour*.

*Guitar Hero 5* is an improvement on *World Tour* in almost every way. Party Play

is fantastic, the updated visuals make for a fresh new take on the series, and the track listing should appeal to a wide variety of musical tastes. This should be an essential purchase for fans of *Guitar Hero*. **NAG**

Dane Remendes



**Plus**  
+ Cool, new visual style  
+ Party Play is great  
+ Good set list

**Minus**  
- None

### Bottom Line

This year's *Guitar Hero* improves greatly on what *World Tour* had to offer. Get drunk, grab that microphone and start rocking.

AVAILABLE AT  
Look & Listen  
For the Fans







# ROCK BAND™



## BUILD A BAND ROCK THE UNIVERSE

INCLUDING THE HITS...

BACKSTAGE PASS

**CHOOSE YOUR INSTRUMENT**  
BASS, DRUMS, GUITAR OR MICROPHONE  
**THEN PERFORM WITH YOUR FRIENDS!**

- ▶ USE THE POWER OF ROCK TO WIN CHALLENGES
- ▶ CUSTOMIZE YOUR WHOLE ENTOURAGE
- ▶ SKILL SET OPTIONS FOR EVERY KIND OF PLAYER

BLINK 182 **ALIENS EXIST**

EUROPE **THE FINAL COUNTDOWN**

INCUBUS **DIG**

JACKSON 5 **I WANT YOU BACK**

PINK **SO WHAT**

QUEEN **WE WILL ROCK YOU**

**AND MORE!**



BACKSTAGE PASS

**NuMetro**  
Interactive



PLAYSTATION 3



XBOX 360



Wii

NINTENDO DS



**HARMONIX**



LEGO ROCK BAND video game (excluding LEGO assets) © 2009 Harmonix Music Systems, Inc. Nintendo DS skus developed by Backbone Entertainment. Xbox 360, PS3 and Wii skus developed by TT Games Publishing Ltd. Published by Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment, a division of Warner Bros. Home Entertainment Inc. Produced by TT Games under license from the LEGO Group. Uses Bink video. Copyright © 1997-2009 by RAD Game Tools, Inc. Development tools and related technology provided under license from CRI Middleware, Inc. © 2009 CRI Middleware, Inc. All rights reserved. Harmonix, Rock Band and all related titles and logos are trademarks of Harmonix Music Systems, Inc., an MTV Networks company. MTV, Music Television, MTV Games and all related titles and logos are trademarks of MTV Networks, a division of Viacom International Inc. LEGO, the LEGO logo, the Brick and the Knob configurations and the Minifigure are trademarks of the LEGO Group. © 2009 The LEGO Group. Backbone and the Backbone logo are trademarks of Backbone Entertainment, a Foundation 9 Entertainment company. "XBOX" and "PLAYSTATION" are trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. All Rights Reserved. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies. Trademarks are property of their respective owners. Nintendo DS and Wii are trademarks of Nintendo. LEGO® Rock Band™ is compatible with all Rock Band™ controllers and most Guitar Hero® and authorized third party instrument controllers and microphones. "Guitar Hero" is a registered trademark of Activision Publishing, Inc. All other trademarks and copyrights are the property of their respective owners. All rights reserved.

WBIE LOGO, WB SHIELD: ™ & © Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. (s09)

LEGO® Rock Band™ is compatible with all Rock Band™ controllers and most Guitar Hero® and authorized third party instrument controllers and microphones.



Burn the rubber - featuring realistic smoke and screaming tyres



## Need for Speed: Shift

Back to basics

Genre→ Racing

PC 360 PS3 Wii PS2 PSP DS

**F**OR MANY YEARS, THE *Need for Speed* franchise has stood out as a top arcade-racing brand. The action was never completely realistic, and with the introduction of the 'Underground' flavour, it got rather over the top. But it was always a fun experience, more or less, and it generally delivered the goods. Well, up until *Carbon*, anyway. From *Carbon* onwards, things just got a little nasty for *Need for Speed* fans. The games seemed to have reached a peak with *Most Wanted*, and the erstwhile developers were not hitting the mark with subsequent releases.

In the time between the release of *Undercover* and now, Electronic Arts closed down the development studio (Black Box) and has given the responsibility for creating new *Need for Speed* games to another studio – Slightly Mad Studios.

Members of this outfit – including South Africa's own Stephen Viljoen – had previously worked on some very hardcore racing games, including the *GTR* series under the guise of SimBin.

Naturally, when a new developer enters the picture, there are going to be some changes. However, Slightly Mad's experience with nuts-and-bolts racing titles means that the kind of changes that have been implemented in *Need for Speed: Shift* are perhaps a little more far-reaching than would normally be the case. It's less of a 'next instalment' and more of a series reboot – which isn't a bad thing, considering the franchise's flagging fortunes. The new game returns to the roots of the franchise: no cops,

no underground racing events, and no convoluted story lines. Rather, it's about driving desirable cars at breakneck speeds around challenging tracks.

This shift in focus, away from the world of illicit street racing and back to the 'tamer' environments offered by racetracks, wasn't well received when *Need for Speed: ProStreet* was released. Whether the reaction to this new title will be the same remains to be seen, and this is largely because it is (in broader racing-simulator terms) a really good game. But those who consider themselves adherent to the 'Underground' sub-genre will undoubtedly gripe.

Slightly Mad's approach was one of reintroducing the joy of driving to the franchise, rather than seeing if they could include every kind of rim ever made. They shifted their focus away from the trimmings and back towards the driving, which really is the core of the game. Sure, cars can still be modified visually in the game, but this modification has taken a backseat (and is subsequently the game's weakest point).

In trying to recapture the essence







of the franchise, the developers have injected what they term "true driving experience" into the game. This means that the physics are as realistic as you can expect, the sound effects are top notch, and the overall experience is as close to hurtling down a track at 210 kilometres an hour as the player can get without leaving their couch. The game is best played using the driver's point of view (don't groan, try it). This is because the experience is the most realistic in this view mode – aspects like driver head movement, reliable dials and even impact effects have all been added to the title. While the traditional view modes are still available, the game is no longer about how cool your car looks while you drive it, but rather what it feels like to be behind the wheel of a stunningly powerful car.

While doing this, Slightly Mad still managed to keep the game accessible. When the difficulty settings are maxed out, the game is a hardcore simulator fan's dream. However, the difficulties are wonderfully scalable, meaning that even the most inexperienced player can still draw massive reward from the title.

And rewards aren't just given to winners: players will earn experience and progress through the game whether they get podium finishes or not. Naturally, being first over the finish line is better, but any completed race will allow the player to progress through the game's fifty skill ranks.

Additionally, a new system of reward has been devised. Players are ranked as either Aggressive or Precision drivers, depending on how they take on each race (and the opponents on the track). Smashing opponents out of the way and tailgating will get the player aggression scores, while hitting high speeds and sticking to racing lines will get the player precision points.

The player will be able to take part in a large number of events, upgrading their chosen cars along the way. Upgrades are in the form of packages for the most part, and don't go into the minutiae of performance tweaking that other games might employ. While most of the racing events are more 'realistic' depictions of competitive driving, there are also opportunities to take part in some *Need*

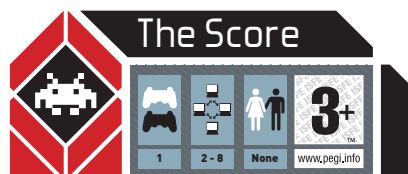
for *Speed* favourites such as drifting.

The whole package is a rather sweet one. The cars on offer, although fewer in number than in other *Need for Speed* titles, are perfectly recreated, both inside and out. The detail of the tracks is graphically brilliant, and the sound effects associated with driving them are brilliant. The control scheme is wonderfully accessible, although the game does lend itself more to the use of a steering wheel than a standard controller. Some of the voice work gets a little repetitive, but this does little to ruin an otherwise remarkable driving experience. And the impression of speed? Absolutely breathtaking... complete with high-speed tunnel vision and all.

It's a brave move, releasing a game so different from the last few titles. There will definitely be naysayers out there who do not appreciate this game for what it is, but anyone who enjoys driving games should be hooked by this title's effortless grace and excellent handling of virtual racing. You cannot please everyone all the time, and those who think it is more important for a car to have a cool shade of neon bolted to the bottom may not welcome this title with open arms. But they should. This game is all about the driving, which is all the franchise was ever supposed to be about.

**NAG**

**Walt Pretorius**



**Plus**  
+ Awesome graphics  
+ Great physics  
+ Accessible

**Minus**  
- Not 'Underground'  
- Visual customisation  
- No cops

#### Bottom Line

This 'series reboot' takes the *Need for Speed* franchise back to where it was always meant to be.

AVAILABLE AT  
**Look & Listen**  
For the Fans





Rear end close-ups, ninja swords and Gatling guns, what more could you want?



# WET

Insert shameless moisture-related joke here\*

Genre→ Action Shooter

PC 360 PS3 Wii PS2 PSP DS

**"EXPERIENCE THE FREEDOM TO** shoot anytime, anywhere..." is the claim emblazoned boldly on the back of the box. Aside from the fact that it's incorrect (you can't interrupt the cut-scenes with a hail of bullets, unfortunately), it is a pretty good summary of the game dynamic that dominates *WET*.

*WET* is an acrobatic action shooter. You play as Rubi Malone, an ass-kicking, sword-wielding mercenary who gets involved with the wrong crowd. You'll embark on a journey of vengeance, mayhem and general discontent, that's thrown into a story that makes only enough sense to carry the action from one scene to the next, provided you've got sufficient imagination to fill in the blanks.

Rubi is only one woman, but she's got a couple of tricks up her sleeve to help her deal with the hundreds of hapless grunts that will get gunned down, chopped up and sliced through when they step in front of her. Acrobatic Slow-Mo is one of those tricks, and it's a trick that sees a lot of use. Rubi doesn't mess around with limited bullet time like *Max Payne*, or any *Wolfenstein*-style time-slowing occult nonsense. Rubi likes her bullet time like she likes her bourbon: straight up, and in excess. Every time you open fire while Rubi's airborne or sliding on her knees, she will enter Acrobatic Slow-Mo. In this mode, she'll dual-wield her weapons of choice (pistols, shotguns, SMGs or crossbows), with one weapon locking onto nearby enemies and the other completely under your control. It's a system that works incredibly well when there are masses of enemies around; and if it's just



you and a couple of foes, you can set both sights on a single enemy to take him down twice as fast. It does take some getting used to, and it's tough to shake the feeling that this already short game might not crack even five hours without the system, but suckers for cool action moments will be in their element here.

If you're not a sucker for said moments, and tend to live with a short, impatient fuse, then you'll probably die of boredom before the game's charm can take hold – the action, as cool as it is (and I use "cool" in the Samuel L. Jackson sense), is very repetitive. The game is divided into a number of chapters, with each chapter having a few mini-games within. These include "monster box"-filled arenas, and Rage Mode, which sets the game's render to cel-shaded to take on a *Tank Girl* feel while Rubi's on a wild killing spree. These modes are repeated – a lot – and give the impression that the developers couldn't figure out how to take the visual and combat concepts and transform them

into a truly meaningful game.

If you're not looking for meaning, or just have a thing for Eliza Dushku (or Malcom McDowell, if that's how you roll), and have a weekend to spare, *WET* should satisfy most of your mindless action cravings. **NAG**

Geoff Burrows

## Visual splendour

While the game is repetitive, this is alleviated somewhat by the excellent visuals. The graphics are gritty and dirty, but don't fall prey to the brown-and-grey washed-out look that plagues so many recent games. There's plenty of colour, and the visual effects, such as film grain and depth of field, are used elegantly to create a cinematic feel that helps push the pace of the game when combined with the fantastic '70s-inspired punk, funk and rockabilly soundtrack.



## The Score



### Plus

- + Stylish visuals
- + Great soundtrack
- + Combat works well

### Minus

- Repetitive
- Can get frustrating

### Bottom Line

It won't be for everyone, but those with enough patience should be sufficiently entertained.

AVAILABLE AT  
Look Listen  
Feel the Pulse

72

\* I've got nothing – can it be a fart joke rather? Ed.



# DREAMHACK

THE WORLD'S LARGEST COMPUTER FESTIVAL

## QUAKE REBORN



Congratulations to the following QUAKE - REBORN winners:

- |                      |                     |                  |                   |            |
|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| 1. fnaticMSI.Spartle | 2. fnaticMSI.l1nkje | 3. s3c-B.Ph4ntom | 4. Shase          | 5. Detrony |
| 6. Curious           | 7. mint.Silence     | 8. mint.m4dcow   | 9. s3c-B.Linchpin | 10. slsha  |
| 11. LickWid-Ice      | 12. Fragtion        | 13. skyZA        | 14. Adrenalin     | 15. Atrox  |

Arena77 wish to thank the following sponsors  
for making the Dreamhack Qualifier at rAge 2009 possible:



Thanks to Mind Sports South Africa for recognising the tournament and thereby accrediting the winner. This means that Travis (Shase) Weedon will officially represent South Africa in Sweden at the end of November 2009 in the Quake III Live tournament.

Should you want to be the next gamer representing South Africa on an international playing field and your share in a healthy prize purse, simply log on to [www.arena77.com](http://www.arena77.com) and [www.langames.co.za](http://www.langames.co.za) for news about upcoming tournaments.



Dates with Violette  
never end well



## Velvet Assassin

Trying to get real...

Genre→ Stealth Action

PC **360** PS3 Wii PS2 PSP DS

**I**SINCERELY HOPE THAT MOST people don't think World War II was fought the way it is depicted in videogames. However, just in case they do, *Velvet Assassin* takes a slightly different look at the conflict. The game is based on the life of Violette Szabo, a British agent who worked deep behind enemy lines. The player assumes the role of Violette Summer, who is also a British agent. The story begins with Violette lying in a hospital bed, comatose and defenceless. It then plays out through a variety of missions, which Violette was sent on, requiring her to kill people and take out installations.

It is obvious that the developers wanted to steer clear of the usual World War II game approach, and instead implemented a stealth game dynamic. That's commendable, to say the least, but the game doesn't quite achieve what it sets out to do. While *Velvet Assassin* could have been a top-notch sneaker, the truth is that it has far too many flaws to rise above mediocrity.

The first flaw [and one that is vital to a game of this nature] lies in the AI. It is completely inconsistent. On the one hand, you have enemies who seem to be incapable of finding their own rear ends; while on the other, you have bad guys who seem to have X-ray night-vision goggles grafted to their heads. This inconsistency could be blamed on varying degrees of intelligence, but the variation is too wide. Some of them couldn't see an elephant if it stood in front of them; others can see a

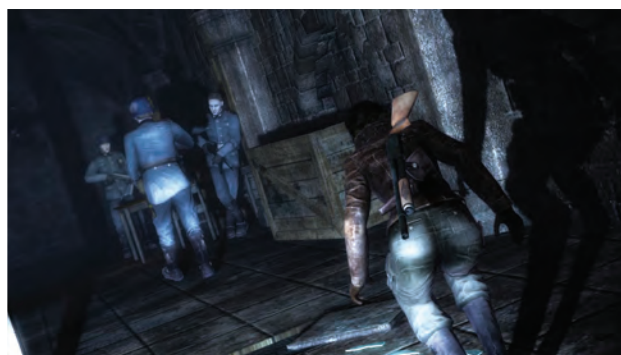
gnat on the butt of a bison at 5,000 yards... through a wall... at night.

The major problem that arises from this – and this isn't just an issue in this game – is that titles in this genre rely too heavily on stealth. Sure, stealth is the theme, but these 'people' surely aren't really that useless in a stand-up fight. Violette is. If she is seen, she has a slim chance of survival. She could run and hide, or she could 'take out' opponents with one of the rare firearms that she can pick up in the game. (Call me crazy, but I thought that an operative behind enemy lines would carry a silenced pistol, a few bullets and standard kit, rather than relying on finding them in an enemy base). Even if she has a firearm, ammunition is rationed very tightly. And it will take a few shots to put down even the weakest soldier (unless, of course, it is an accurate headshot). Being sneaky in this game is very important. But then, the inconsistent AI and the finicky controls, which more often than not demand absolute perfect positioning, rear their heads. The result is a number of cheap, annoying deaths and lots of reloading.

This makes playing the game tedious, particularly because the missions are very linear. Of course, Violette can slow down time to take on (literally) one enemy in a frontal attack (using a dose of morphine), but the system is not well implemented, and often does more harm than good.

Still, the game can be fun – if you're the forgiving type. Just don't expect anything too much from it, and you and *Velvet Assassin* may get along just fine. **NAG**

Walt Pretorius



### The Score



#### Plus

- + A different look at WWII
- + Some good visuals

#### Minus

- Scrambled AI
- Too many cheap deaths

#### Bottom Line

It's not an abysmal title, but its numerous niggles 'keep' it in the realms of mediocrity

AVAILABLE AT  
**Look & Listen**  
For the Fans

**(60)**



Rule as all-powerful, El Presidente as you decide whether to turn your tropical island into a vacation paradise, a prosperous industrial nation or jail the masses in your Banana Republic!

New campaign mode, scenarios and online capabilities take this award-winning, strategy/sim game to a whole new level. Don't forget, take care of your people or they will take care of you!

# TROPICO 3

## EL PRESIDENTE IS BACK ON PC AND XBOX 360!



TROPICO RELOADED  
OUT NOW!



ARRIVAL  
TROPICO ISLAND  
OCTOBER 2009



**kalypso**

HAEMIMONT  
GAMES

XBOX 360

XBOX  
LIVE

THE WAY  
NVIDIA  
IT'S MEANT TO BE PLAYED



Copyright © 2009 Kalypso Media, Inc. USA. All rights reserved. Developed by Haemimont Games. Published by Kalypso Media, Inc. USA. All other logos, copyrights and trademarks are property of their respective owners. Tropicó is a registered trademark of Take-Two Interactive Software, Inc. used under license by Kalypso Media, Inc. USA. Windows, the Windows Vista start button, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies and 'Games for Windows' and the Windows Vista Start button logo are used under license from Microsoft.

WWW.TROPICO3.COM

Distributed Exclusively by Apex Interactive (011) 796 5040, [www.apexint.co.za](http://www.apexint.co.za) or [Sales@apexint.co.za](mailto:Sales@apexint.co.za). All rights and Trademarks and Logos are copyright of their respective owners.



Hulk poses for the camera, while Mr Fantastic and Invisible Woman give each other the most awesome high-five in history.



## Marvel: Ultimate Alliance 2

Hulk Smash!

Genre→ Action

PC 360 PS3 Wii PS2 PSP DS

**AS MARVEL'S VISUAL ONSLAUGHT** on the box office continues, superhero games are fast becoming a dime a dozen. Thankfully, *Marvel: Ultimate Alliance 2* comes from a line of games that, while not particularly original, always offer a solid action experience. *Marvel: Ultimate Alliance 2* continues the tradition of huge explosions, ass-kicking combat and a few sprinkles of RPG flavour, and throws it into Marvel's popular, seven-part *Civil War* miniseries.

*Civil War* is an interesting story that revolves around Iron Man and Captain America as leaders of opposing forces. During times of uncertainty, the American public has decided that super humans, both good and evil, need to be kept on a leash, and the Superhuman Registration Act is passed. On one side of the law, you have Iron Man, who believes that the government knows best, and the logical thing to do is accept their new legislation. Captain America, ever the super human for the people, decides to rebel against the government, and turns to acts declared as terrorism in an attempt to free his fellow super humans.

After a few missions in the single-player campaign, you'll get to make your decision about which side of the law you are on, which will determine the rest of the game's progress, as well as which of the 24 super humans you can have on your team of four. While there are differences in the two sides of the equation, many of the missions share common elements regardless of which side you choose; still, it should be enough to encourage an extra play-through on a higher difficulty.



The major new feature in *M: UA2* is the ability to combine powers from different characters into a single force. It's called Fusion. To use a Fusion Ability, you need to hammer away at the enemy, using a combination of melee attacks and regular power attacks until the Fusion meter fills up. When it does, you can unleash hell on your unwitting foes. While Fusion certainly adds an extra bit of depth to this fun, but otherwise shallow action game, it doesn't perform quite as well as one might expect. There are only really a few types of fusions. For example, Deadpool and Storm can team up to create a tornado of grenades that whirls around the room. Combine Storm with Gambit, and you'll have the same thing with his kinetically charged cards; or combine her with Wolverine, and the Adamantium-reinforced fool will jump straight into the vortex. The greatest 'delight' in the Fusion powers comes from the co-op play, where both players have to press the same button at the same time to activate. It's always entertaining to see who, in a group of four players, is thinking along the same lines. The regular powers are also quite repetitive between characters, only really changing slightly in the damage

that they inflict, and obviously the visuals. It's not a huge issue, if you know what to expect, but there are only around ten or so distinct powers.

If you're not easily put off by the lack of powers, you'll find *M: UA2* to be incredibly entertaining. The scenes are varied, the environments are delightfully destructible, and the visuals are fantastic. It's definitely worth playing for Marvel fans, or anyone looking for an action-packed co-op experience.

**NAG**  
Geoff Burrows

The Score

1-4

2-4

2-4

16+

**Plus**

- + Looks good
- + Four player co-op
- + Great setting

**Minus**

- Repetitive powers
- Shallow combat

### Bottom Line

Shallow, but loads of fun. As long as you're not expecting too much, *Marvel: Ultimate Alliance 2* should keep you entertained for a while.

AVAILABLE AT  
**Look & Listen**  
For the Fans

76



Thousands of decisions  
in a microsecond.  
And no mistakes.



## **ESET Smart Security 4**

The faster, lighter PC protection

Protects against malware  
Gives no chance to hackers  
Filters spam e-mail

we protect your digital worlds



[www.eset.co.za](http://www.eset.co.za)



"What's-his-name" hits it for a four...



## Ashes Cricket 2009

Who the hell is Jack Kallace?

Genre→ Stealth Action

PC 360 PS3 Wii PS2 PSP DS

**CRICKET GAMES ARE RARE.** Although Codemasters and EA have produced cricket games in the past, those games have never been released regularly. That's probably because, on a global scale, cricket is a bit of a niche sport. That's probably why the games have never been quite what they should have been. Smaller development teams (perhaps with less experience) would have been tasked with these titles – with poor results. It's a sad thing if you like cricket.

Codemasters has released a new cricket game [the first we have seen in many years] in the form of *Ashes Cricket 2009*. As the name implies, the game focuses on that age-old rivalry between Australia and England: the Ashes series. You would be forgiven for wanting to know why a game featuring a competition between two of South Africa's biggest cricket rivals would appeal to us. The truth is that the Ashes series is just a part of the game: there are test matches and ODIs aplenty in this title, and it features teams from all around the world. And that's where my first gripe comes in.

The company that is not producing games holds the licences for international cricket teams. Codemasters managed to get licences for England and Australia, but that's it. People who want to use teams other than ones coming from large islands in the southern hemisphere or small islands in the northern hemisphere will have to deal with mangled names and faces. It took me a while to figure out that Jack Kallace is supposed to be Jacques Kallis. Gibbs is Gabbs, Smith is Smythe and poor A.B. de Villiers, well, his name ended up sounding like a French haemorrhoid treatment. It's not much more than an annoyance, but those who like to use other teams may find it to be rather distracting.

Another gripe I have is the graphics. They're not quite what they should be, and some of the animations are plain nasty.

But get past these two issues, and you actually have a really fun game – and the best cricket-based game ever made, without a doubt. The controls are intuitive and make sense, making batting and bowling a lot easier than before (if you get the finicky timing right). The player is also more involved in the game. Catches in the field are entirely up to the player, using a rather nice (if somewhat unforgiving) timing-based system. Despite the

problems, this game provides a fun and highly entertaining cricket experience.

While *Ashes Cricket 2009* certainly is not the best sports simulation ever, it does offer the player much more than any other cricket game, and is well worth a try. The dynamics are fluid and well put together, and the overall experience is a rather exciting one. The game is responsive and any frustration that arises from playing it comes from skill challenges, rather than poor coding. It's just a pity about those names... **NAG**

'Waldo Pectorious'



- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Plus</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Good player involvement</li> <li>+ Overall good experience</li> </ul> | <p><b>Minus</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mangled names and faces</li> <li>- Some poor animation</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

### Bottom Line

It's not perfect, but it's the best cricket game ever made. I'm sure Kallace would agree.

AVAILABLE AT  
Look & Listen  
For the Fans

79



Ster-Kinekor Entertainment is giving away two Xbox 360 King of Fighters XII games + limited-edition figurine hampers; and two PS3 King of Fighters XII games + limited-edition figurine hampers.



To enter,  
**SMS** Fighters  
to 35543

- SMSes charged at R3 each
- Competition closes 30 November 2009
- Winners will be notified by phone
- The judge's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into





# East India Company

Trade, negotiate or fill the seas with bodies to reach the top

Genre→ Real-Time Strategy/Management

PC 360 PS3 Wii PS2 PSP DS

**E**AST INDIA COMPANY ISN'T quite a management game. It's more like an RTS with management bits tacked on. The game puts you in charge of one of the historically renowned East India Companies: you've got the choice of representing Portugal, Britain, France, Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Spain or the Holy Roman Empire across a number of different single-player campaigns with varying victory conditions. The East India Companies were really into trading with India to bring spices, tea and other assorted commodities back to Europe – or something to that effect (we here at NAG are not historians). That's essentially what this game entails: building and managing fleets to engage in a little import/export. To do this, you're given access to your home port where you can build ships; buy (and sell) items and manage your fleets by assigning ships (and commanders) to them.

Once you've got your first fleet in the water, you can send it out to purchase MTIs (Main Trade Items) from ports in India, Africa and Europe. These MTIs are important because they're the most valuable merchandise in the game. Automatic trade routes can be set up for each fleet – they'll then head out to routinely buy trade items from their destination port, after which they'll return home to sell their cargo and buy items to sell once they return to the foreign port. Ten ship types are on offer in the game, each with their own stats for cargo space, offensive power and the like. Offensive power becomes important later in the

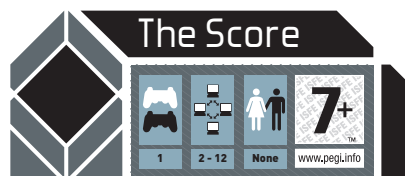


game when wars start breaking out (i.e., when you get tired of being diplomatic) and pirates loiter around the seas looking for easy pickings. This is where the Tactical Level comes into play. While all battles in the game can be automatically resolved, it's more fun in *EIC* to take manual command of the fleet that has come under attack. This switches the game over to the Tactical Level, where you have the option to direct your entire fleet, RTS style, or take direct control of a single ship in the fleet. Direct control means that you choose when to fire the cannons, how to fly the sails and where to steer your ship. These naval battles are quite enjoyable, but don't have much tactical depth – you simply observe the wind (and navigate accordingly) and choose the size of the balls that you plan on violently flinging in the direction of your enemy.

That's really all there is to *EIC*, and it can get a bit tedious. The economic aspect is enjoyable for a while, but eventually you'll get tired of watching your ships moving to and from Cape Town with cargo holds full of diamonds for hours on end. There's no real management – you can upgrade buildings at your ports (aside from your home port, you can

attack and capture other ports around the game world), but you don't have any other managerial power aside from that. The game certainly delivers on its promise of letting you control one of the East India Companies (hence the heavy focus on economics in the game), but anyone expecting a true management game would be better off checking out *Tropico 3* or *Anno 1404*. Anyone expecting a true RTS would be better off looking somewhere else. **NAG**

Dane Remendes



## Plus

- + Decent enough naval battles
- + Good economy system

## Minus

- Management aspect lacks depth
- Can get slightly tedious

## Bottom Line

East India Company is great as an economics simulator or for anyone fascinated with the history of the East India Companies.

AVAILABLE AT  
Look & Listen  
Fuel the Fans

65



# Risen

A cult classic or a half-baked product?

Genre→ Action RPG

PC **360** PS3 Wii PS2 PSP DS

**R**ISEN IS GETTING SOME very mixed feedback. And with good reason: on the one hand, there are the fans of *Gothic* (a previous project by this developer) who love the game; and on the other, there is a large group of people who are disappointed. While it's all fine and well arguing stylistic development issues, the truth is that games need to deliver the goods in a number of areas... many of which see *Risen* wanting.

The game puts the player in the shoes of a castaway, who is washed up on the shores of a mysterious, volcanic island. As the player explores, the mystery deepens – sort of like a medieval videogame version of *Lost*. The story is not bad at all, but that's pretty much all that might set *Risen* apart.

The first bad impression that the game makes comes in the form of dated graphics. The characters don't look good, and the environments are stilted. Foliage will turn along with the player, which is a massive no-no in the age of high-polygon 3D graphics. The characters aren't



animated well, either, and the cut-scenes are as lacklustre as the voice acting.

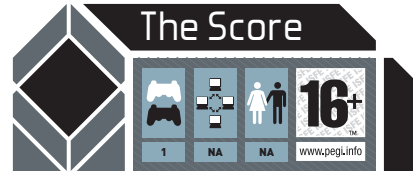
But the real issue comes in the form of the controls. *Risen* feels clumsy at best, and several control ideas have been rather poorly implemented. This comes into play during combat, with the player unable to lock onto enemies and having to deal with a finicky camera.

*Risen* has a few redeeming qualities, but the player will have to be patient with the title to find them. Fans of previous games by this studio might be used to their techniques and deliveries, but the wider market will likely find *Risen* to be very disappointing. It's hardly surprising that the game's release has been pushed back to Q2 next year in the USA; it needs work. **NAG**

Walt Pretorius



## The Score



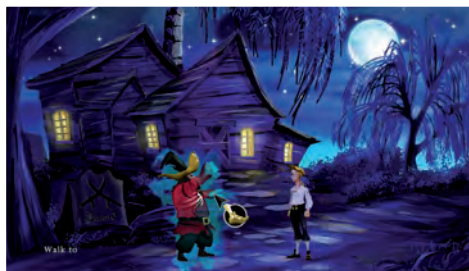
AVAILABLE AT  
Look & Listen  
For the Fans

## Bottom Line

*Risen* should have been delayed: it needs a bit of work.







## Coolness

You can now actually speak to Spiffy the dog in the Scumm Bar, which was shown as a screen shot on the back of the original box but was not possible in-game.



# The Secret of Monkey Island: Special Edition

Monkey reloaded

Genre→ Point-and-click Adventure

PC 360 PS3 Wii PS2 PSP DS

**T**HE SECRET OF MONKEY *Island* was the first game I ever bought when I was young; the original had creepy box art and came on about five floppy disks. It also had one of those fancy code-wheel devices to thwart would-be pirates (which is quite ironic seeing as throughout the game you're trying to become one – a pirate that is, not a code wheel). The game marked the start of one of the most beloved adventure game series of the nineties. Now, nineteen years later, LucasArts has re-released a beautifully revamped Special Edition of one of the best adventure games ever made.

For those who haven't played the original, the game follows the first adventure of Guybrush Threepwood as he tries to become a pirate, win the heart of a feisty governor, and dispatch his soon-to-be arch nemesis, the evil ghost pirate LeChuck. It's classic point-and-click adventure fun held together by an entertaining story, unforgettable characters, and enough bananas to keep a three-headed monkey happy for days.

*The Secret of Monkey Island: Special Edition* is exactly the same game as the original, but now includes updated graphics, revamped music and full voice-overs featuring returning cast members from the later *Monkey Island* games. The result is a tremendously nostalgic trip that manages to re-package all of the initial charm and witty humour of the original.

Those expecting new gameplay, scenes or puzzles won't find any here: this is exactly the same game you played nineteen years ago. Actually, that's not entirely true. There is a cameo



appearance by Manuel "Manny" Calavera from *Grim Fandango*, which was obviously not in the original, but I'll leave that up to you to spot.

At any point while playing, you can swap between the updated version and the original in all of its pixelated glory. It's a wonderful addition that allows one to see the amount of dedication and attention to detail the Special Edition creators have gone into. In some scenes, the artists have left some of the pixels from the original in the re-drawn backgrounds, which is a nice gesture in honouring the original.

Some minor glitches are noticeable in the PC version, as occasionally the cursor doesn't highlight what you want it to; this is particularly noticeable when you're selecting speech options. In addition, some of the overhead maps are quite unclear and this means not being able to see areas that you are able to walk to. This resulted in me getting stuck for about twenty minutes, as I couldn't see the fort at the edge of the volcano on Monkey Island. That being said, the inclusion of a hint system ensures that one is never really stuck for too long.

If you've never played the original *Monkey Island*, but have already played

through later sequels such as *The Curse of Monkey Island* or *Escape from Monkey Island*, then this is an essential chunk of swashbuckling adventure you've missed out on. Fortunately, that's now easily fixed by playing through this Special Edition. For fans of adventure games, I thoroughly recommend diving into this one. It's available as hefty 2GB download via Steam, or you can check it out on Xbox LIVE Arcade – it's a 500MB download for 800 Microsoft Points.

**NAG**  
Miklós Szecsei



**Plus**  
+ Tons of nostalgia  
+ Beautifully updated  
+ Classic Monkey Island

**Minus**  
- Buggy cursor highlighting

## Bottom Line

A gloriously revamped version that will keep fans and newcomers to the series happy and entertained for hours.

AVAILABLE AT  
Look & Listen  
For the Fans





# Hearts of Iron III

A cure for insomnia

Genre→ Real-Time Grand Strategy

PC 360 PS3 Wii PS2 PSP DS

**W**OW, IT IS NOT 'often' (meaning: "this is the first time") that I encounter a strategy game that I feel completely lost trying to play, and end up thoroughly daunted and intimidated by. In fact, calling this a "game" may be something of a stretch in the first place: it is more an intense intellectual exercise, probably appealing to hardcore World War II historians. Though this may sound negative, it is rather more complex than that. You see, *Hearts of Iron III* does what (I think) it sets out to do rather well: it allows you to take control of almost any nation during the period starting just before and ending just after WWII. You take control of it in almost every sense, including industry, politics (both internal and international), military (all arms, of course), diplomacy, education – you name it. This is why it is so daunting: just to be able to play a game with any hope of victory, you will first need to wade through the 90-or-so-page manual. The tutorial is pretty useless: it shows you what can be done, but not really how, and certainly gives

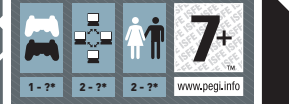


little if any indication of how to actually play. The 'dryness' is not alleviated by the fact that the interface, other than a map of the world, consists pretty much entirely of a variety of menus and similar screens. Play takes place in a sort of accelerated 'real-time' (though still painfully slow: a game spans years, taking place over many hours) that can be paused while deliberating tweaks to your economy or strategy. This is not a lightweight game, folks. To enjoy it, you will need to 'qualify' for the following: be an avid enthusiast of WWII history, and be willing to spend many, many hours not only on playing the game, but also on first learning how to play it. To conclude: this title is excellent as a historical speculative exercise, but perhaps not entirely good as a game. **NAG**

Alex Jelagin



## The Score



AVAILABLE AT  
Look & Listen  
For the Fans

## Bottom Line

This is not so much a game as a WWII scholar's "toy." It requires many hours just to learn, so no quick jumping in here.

\* We were not able to ascertain the exact details of the number of players this game can support.



# The wallet is dead. Long live the wallet!

Welcome to mowalý, virtually the best place to keep my money.

**mowalý** is easy to get, easy to load with mimoney, easy to use at our rapidly growing list of shops and, best of all, buying stuff with mowalý costs you absolutely nothing in transaction charges! Registering for mowalý is as easy as SMSing 'mowalý' to 31130. We'll send you the future of using money. Pop in your details, set your cellphone and mowalý PIN and you're ready to go!

**mowalý** is the future of keeping and using cash. A virtual wallet that sits on your cellphone, mowalý is a safe and secure application that stores mimoney.

**mimoney** is real money that you can use at real stores to buy the things you really want. It is virtual currency, NOT rewards or miles or credits, that is accessed from your cellphone for ease of use. You just give your unique mimoney voucher number to the cashier when paying and you're done! mimoney is powered by Standard Bank so you know it's real money from a real financial institution.

get it now, SMS 'mowalý' to 31130



Visit **www.mowalý.co.za** or call 0861 mowalý for more information.

Powered by





Developer → Pyro Studios Publisher → Eidos Interactive Price → \$5.99

# Commandos: Ammo Pack

**T**HE **COMMANDOS** SERIES (THE original games; not the first-person shooter departure that was *Commandos: Strike Force*) is amazing - even today - and it is often remembered as being notoriously unforgiving. *The Ammo Pack*, available on GOG.com, offers the original title (subtitled, *Behind Enemy Lines*) and its expansion, *Beyond the Call of Duty*, in one package. Gameplay consists of players leading their team of up to six commandos (with varying commando combinations for each scenario) on a variety of missions set during World War II. Each commando's

unique skill set needs to be used to outmanoeuvre an overwhelming Nazi force. This means lots of sneaking around the levels and keeping an eye on the enemy's line of sight to ensure that nobody spots you while you creep around, silently taking down Nazis. It's best described as a real-time tactics game, similar to the *Jagged Alliance* series (but without the turn-based gameplay). The game even has a great multiplayer component, which divides control of the commandos between the players, allowing them to team up and take on the Nazis cooperatively. **NAG**



## SIX-MAN ARMY

Each of the six soldiers that made up the crack squad of commandos in the original game and its expansion boasted their own skills and tools to get the job done. More team members were added in *Commandos 2: Men of Courage*, while *Commandos 3: Destination Berlin* went back to the original team, but dropped the driver in favour of the thief. These are the brave souls who often gave their lives for the good of players who neglected to feverishly tap the quick-save button:

### THE GREEN BERET (JERRY McHALE)

This army boxing champion could quite easily turn you into a mass of putrid goo, using only his fists. Armed with a knife, pistol, climbing axe, auditory decoy and a shovel, this guy likes his fights to be up-close-and-personal.

### THE SPY (RENE DUCHAMP)

A master of subterfuge and silent infiltration, you could be conversing with the spy right now and you wouldn't even suspect that he isn't really your mom. The spy's equipment includes a pistol, poison syringe and a first-aid kit. He can disguise himself by stealing Nazi uniforms.

### THE DRIVER (SID PERKINS)

The driver can do things with a transport truck that shouldn't be spoken of in polite conversation. A pistol, submachine gun and first-aid kit can be found in the driver's bag o' gear. His skills involve the use of vehicles and enemy weapon emplacements.

### THE SAPPER (THOMAS HANCOCK)

If you need something blown up, the sapper is up to the task. His inventory includes a pistol, bear trap, time bomb, remote-controlled bomb, grenades and pliers.

### THE MARINE (JAMES BLACKWOOD)

This guy likes water. A lot. So much so, that his only skill is diving: this allows him to disappear from view. He carries a pistol, knife, inflatable boat and harpoon with him at all times.

### THE SNIPER (SIR FRANCIS T. WOOLRIDGE)

If you can read his name without laughing, congratulations: the sniper will let you live. If not, we apologise in advance. The sniper's bag of tricks contains a pistol, sniper rifle and first-aid kit. Limited ammunition means that his superb, ranged skills must be used efficiently.





THE #1 FIGHTING GAME IS BACK!

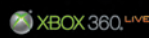
KAZUYA MISHIMA  
IN

**TEKKEN 6**™



**namco**

PLAYSTATION 3



WWW.TEKKEN.COM

TEKKEN™ & © 1994-2009 NAMCO BANDAI Games Inc. Published by NAMCO BANDAI Games Europe SAS.  
Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies and are used under license from Microsoft Association.  
"B." and "PLAYSTATION" are registered trademarks and "PS" is a trademark of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. ® is a registered trademark of Sony Corporation. All rights reserved.

**megarom**  
www.megarom.co.za  
+27 11 361 4800 | sales@megarom.co.za



## Unknown Soldier, Vol. 1: Haunted House

**Format:** Graphic Novel | **Publisher:** Vertigo | **Writer:** Joshua Dysart  
**Artist:** Alberto Ponticelli | **Price:** R94.95

**IT'S NOT OFTEN THAT** you get a comic book that is both socially and politically relevant to the world we live in; and at the same time, provides an intense and thrilling escape from our own lives. *Unknown Soldier* does just that, as writer Joshua Dysart wields his story like a weapon in the face of the average man's complacency. In the story, Dr Moses Lwanga (who was born in Uganda during the reign of Idi Amin) returns to his country of origin after having qualified as a medical doctor in the US. And he's back to make a difference in the war-torn battleground that is Northern Uganda. *Unknown Soldier* depicts the nightmarish violence and shocking inhumanity, synonymous with war, using an uncompromising integrity, and tackling the politically delicate subjects with an intense fury. As you turn the pages, you'll soon realise that even though this is a comic book, much of *Unknown Soldier* is actually based on fact. It's a sobering thought...

Clive Burmeister



## The Web #1

**Format:** Comic Series | **Publisher:** DC  
**Writer:** Angela Robinson | **Artist:** Roger Robinson | **Price:** R34.50

**THERE IS A NEW** hero in town, and he's not too worried about doing the right thing and setting a good example. He's on a mission to find the men responsible for killing his brother. But revenge isn't sweet. As he tracks down the guilty parties, he also begins to uncover some new information about his brother, and realises that his brother might not be the great, stand-up guy he once believed he was... As the plot unwinds, The Web finds himself in a spiralling conspiracy that he won't be able to punch his way through. *The Web* is a pretty enjoyable read, with a lot of action and surprisingly more depth to its plot than there first appears to be. *The Web* drops the reader into the action from the first page, with no real origin or background story. But Angela Robinson's writing is punchy, making the whole project feel new and exciting.

Clive Burmeister



## X-Men: Phoenix Rising

**Format:** Graphic novel | **Publisher:** Marvel  
**Artists:** Various | **Writer:** Various | **Price:** R120

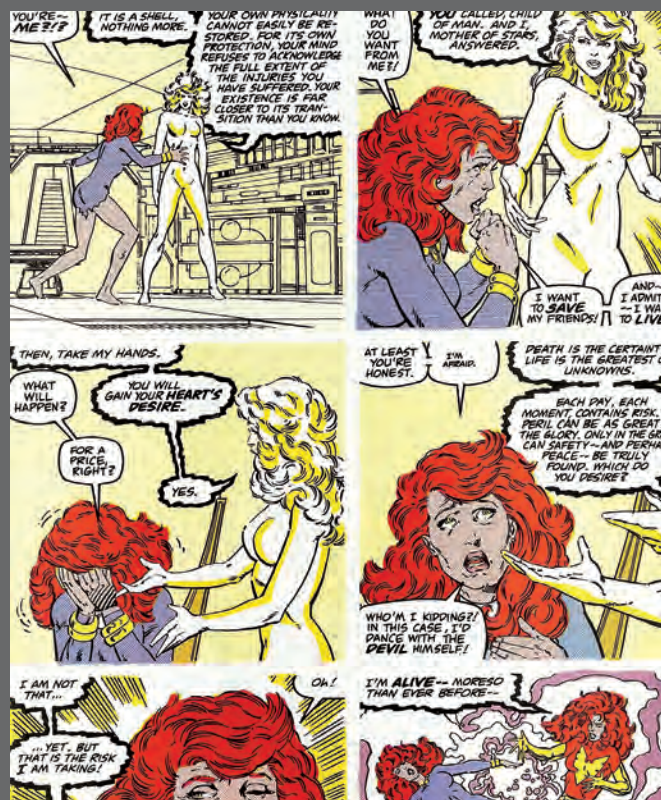
**PHOENIX RISING IS A** collection of three comics from 1986: *The Avengers* #263, *X-Factor* Volume 1 #1, and *The Fantastic Four* #286. As the name implies, it deals with Jean Grey and Phoenix, as well as the how rest of the Marvel characters deal with her, especially Scott Summers.

The story begins with an accident occurring just outside of J.F.K. Airport. A plane goes down in a nearby river, which alerts the authorities, and a nearby Captain Marvel, who promptly jumps into the water to find out what's going on. What he discovers is a pod, possibly buried for years, and inside that pod is Jean Grey; supposedly 'long dead' from her battle with Phoenix.

As the comics are from the '80s, their artwork is from the 'old school', and might not appeal to those used to more modern, computer-assisted art styles. It does lend the book a definite charm, however, and a sense that you're reading a piece of *X-Men* history, more than a simple comic book. Regardless of how you feel about the art, this book forms and important part of the *X-Men* saga, and shouldn't be missed by anyone who considers themselves a fan.



Geoff Burrows





GERARD BUTLER

# GAMER

WHO'S PLAYING YOU?

LIONSGATE and LAKESHORE ENTERTAINMENT PRESENT A LAKESHORE ENTERTAINMENT/LIONSGATE PRODUCTION A NEVELDINE/TAYLOR FILM GERARD BUTLER "GAMER" MICHAEL C. HALL ANDREW VALLETTA  
LOGAN LEHRMAN TERRY CREWS WITH CHRIS LUDACHS BRIDGES AND KYRA SEDGWICK CASTING MARY VEDNEU CSA J.G. CAMPLING PRODUCED BY ROBERT WILLIAMSON AND GEOFF ZANELLI EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS ALIX FRIEDBERG PRODUCED BY PETER AMUNDSON FERNANDO VILLENA  
PRODUCTION DESIGNER JERRY FLEMING DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY EKKEHART POLLACK EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS NEVELDINE/TAYLOR EDITOR DEBBI CARVOSCIOTTI PRODUCTION DESIGNER MICHAEL PASTERNAK COSTUME DESIGNER JAMES MCQUANDE PRODUCTION DESIGNER TOMA ROSENBERG GARY LUCCHESI SKIP WILLIAMSON RICHARD WRIGHT  
WRITTEN BY NEVELDINE & TAYLOR DIRECTED BY NEVELDINE/TAYLOR

NuMetro

LAKESHORE  
LionsGateFilms.com

LAKESHORE

LAKESHORE

LAKESHORE

LAKESHORE

LAKESHORE

LAKESHORE



NOW SHOWING AT CINEMAS



## Hercules: The Knives of Kush #1

**Format:** Comic Miniseries | **Publisher:** Radical | **Writer:** Steve Moore  
**Artist:** Cris Bolton | **Price:** R34.95

**RADICAL PUBLISHING BRINGS ITS** latest miniseries, *Hercules: The Knives of Kush*, to comic stores, with the same stunning presentation as the rest of the series (*Hotwire*, *City of Dust*, etc.). With such breath-taking artwork and consistently gripping stories, it is no wonder that we're beginning to expect some very high standards from the publishers, and this new *Hercules* title of theirs certainly delivers. In this story, Hercules travels with a small group of comrades to Egypt, in search of mercenary work, when they are set upon by a group of vicious pirates. Hercules bests their captain in a one-on-one, causing them to flee. But the damage done to his own ship is irreparable and Hercules and his party must escape into the ocean and swim to the shore. Now in a foreign land, with nothing but weapons, they get caught up in a deadly war as they struggle to prove themselves and find their own place in this strange, new land.



Clive Burmeister



## Models, Inc. #1

**Format:** Comic Series | **Publisher:** Marvel  
**Writer:** Paul Tobin | **Artist:** Vicenc Villagrana | **Price:** R36.95

**IN 1945, MARVEL STARTED** a new comic about an independent and spirited young model known as Millie the Model, in which their creative team combined the excitement of an adventure comic book with the intrigue of the fashion industry and the gossip and scandal that surround the rich and famous. Now, Paul Tobin and Vicenc Villagrana re-imagine model Millicent Collins, and bring her and her group of trendy, jet-setting friends into the 21<sup>st</sup> century with *Models, Inc.* There are many girls out there who enjoy gaming just as much as the boys do, and there is no reason why they need to stop being girls to do so. *Models, Inc.* is a promising, new series aimed at a different target market, and which might just change the way we look at comic books.



Clive Burmeister



## Superman/Batman: Finest Worlds

**Format:** Hard Cover | **Publisher:** DC  
**Artists:** Rags Morales, Rafael Albuquerque | **Writers:** Michael Green, Mike Johnson | **Price:** R120

**SPANNING ISSUES #50 TO #56** of *Superman/Batman, Finest Worlds* covers three stories from this rather bizarre series, all of which were written by Michael Green (writer/producer for TV series *Heroes*, *Smallville* and *Everwood*) and Mike Johnson.

The first story, from issue #50, tells the story of Superman's arrival on Earth, and why it isn't as simple as you thought it was. The second story, *L'I League*, which includes issue #51 and #52, deals with a pack of pint-sized doppelgangers from throughout the DC universe, and it's up to Batman, Superman and the rest of the gang to deal with this miniature problem. This story arc is quite different from the rest in its humour, but the artwork (which is "chibi") seems out of place. Still, it's an entertaining story and provides a bit of a light-hearted view of this typically dark universe.

The largest of the three stories, *Superbat*, runs from issue #53 to #56. It's a sombre tale that begins with the duo having a regular battle with Banshee, which ends up transferring Superman's powers to Bruce Wayne. It's filled with slick artwork, excellent writing and plenty of intrigue, and is perfect for anyone who's a fan of either superhero.



Geoff Burrows

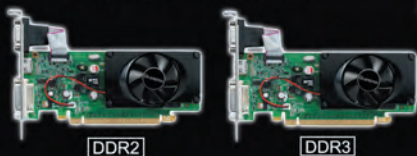




# PLAY UNPRECEDENTED

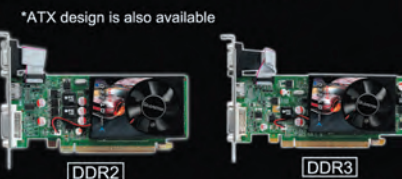
## WinFast® 210

- > 512MB 64bit DDR2/DDR3
- > Low Profile design, ideal HTPC graphics solution
- > Support HDMI output
- > Support NVIDIA CUDA™ technology
- > Support NVIDIA PureVideo® technology
- > Compatible with Microsoft Windows 7
- > Dual Link DVI and VGA output



## WinFast® GT 220

- > 1024MB 128bit DDR2/DDR3
- > Low Profile design, ideal HTPC graphics solution
- > Support HDMI output
- > Support NVIDIA CUDA™ technology
- > Support NVIDIA PureVideo® technology
- > Compatible with Microsoft Windows 7
- > Dual Link DVI and VGA output



\*ATX design is also available

From November 01, 09 ~ November 31, 09, simply answer the question below, you could get one WinFast GT 220 1024MB DDR2 or one WinFast 210 512MB DDR2.

Please visit <http://www.leadtek.com/apac/>

**Does WinFast GT 220 support HDMI?**

a. Yes b. No

**Leadtek Research Inc**

WE MAKE DREAMS A REALITY

18F 166 Chien-Yi Rd., Chung Ho City, Taipei County 23511, Taiwan

Tel : +886-2-8226-5800 Fax : +886-2-8226-5801

Web : [www.leadtek.com](http://www.leadtek.com) email : [contact@leadtek.com](mailto:contact@leadtek.com)

**LEADTEK**



## Korg Highmountain Deluxe Collector Figure

**RRP:** R470

**Supplier:** [www.awx.co.za](http://www.awx.co.za)

**Series:** World of Warcraft Action Figures – Series 2

Don't mess with the Tauren. These man-cow behemoths will destroy you. This figure is quite detailed and Korg enters the scene wielding a rifle that doubles as a scythe.

**A rifle that doubles as a scythe.**

We urge you to consider that as you read the first sentence of this paragraph again. It also comes with a display stand.



## Axel

**RRP:** R225

**Supplier:** [www.awx.co.za](http://www.awx.co.za)

**Series:** Kingdom Hearts II Play Arts

That hair is amazing. Just look at it... amazing. This figure depicts one of the characters from the Disney/Square Enix videogame collaboration known as *Kingdom Hearts II*. Aside from that wonderful gravity-defying hair, this figure comes with a couple of glaives that could quite possibly cause a real-world fatality. The packaging also contains an extra pair of hands for when you're bored with the originals.



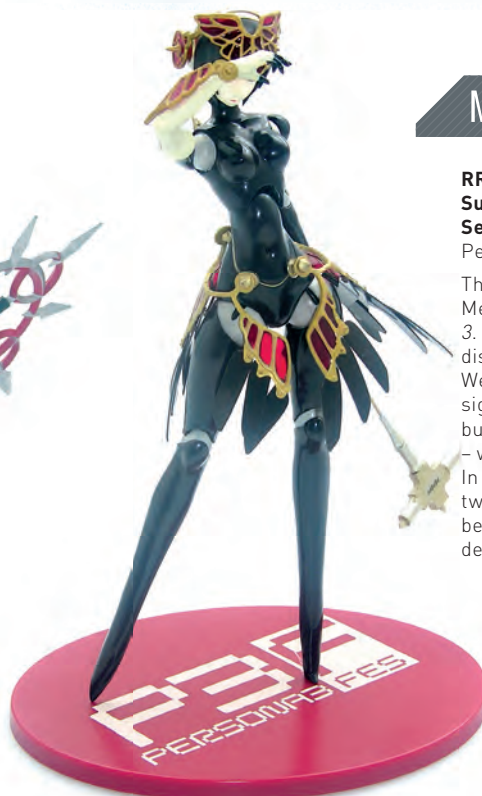
## Metis

**RRP:** R770

**Supplier:** [www.awx.co.za](http://www.awx.co.za)

**Series:** Shin Megami Tensei: Persona 3

This figure is modelled after Metis, a character from *Persona 3*. She comes with a staff, a display stand and a signpost. We're not sure what the significance of the signpost is, but we're sure it's very important – world safety-type important. In the packaging, you'll find two additional faces that can be clipped onto the figure, each depicting a different emotion.







# DJ HERO

THE FUTURE BEGINS SOON

NOW THE REVOLUTION IS IN YOUR HANDS. YOU ARE THE MASTER OF 93 MIXES THAT SPAN SPACE AND TIME. SCRATCH AND MIX THE MUSIC OF JAY-Z, EMINEM, DAFT PUNK, BLONDIE, RIHANNA, BEASTIE BOYS, BENNY BENASSI AND MORE. TAKE CONTROL OF THE HEART, SOUL AND CIRCUITRY OF THE PARTY. ACCEPT YOUR DESTINY AT [DJHERO.COM](http://DJHERO.COM).



PlayStation.2

PS3



Wii

XBOX 360

megarom  
[www.megarom.co.za](http://www.megarom.co.za)

FreeStyleGames

ACTIVISION  
[activision.com](http://activision.com)

© 2009 ACTIVISION PUBLISHING, INC. ACTIVISION IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK AND DJ HERO IS A TRADEMARK OF ACTIVISION PUBLISHING, INC. PATENTS PENDING. "2", "PlayStation" AND "PS" ARE REGISTERED TRADEMARKS OF SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT INC. WII IS A TRADEMARK OF NINTENDO. MICROSOFT, XBOX, XBOX 360, XBOX LIVE, AND THE XBOX LOGOS ARE TRADEMARKS OF THE MICROSOFT GROUP OF COMPANIES. ALL OTHER TRADEMARKS AND TRADE NAMES ARE THE PROPERTIES OF THEIR RESPECTIVE OWNERS. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.  
ACTIVISION AUTHORIZES USE OF THIS ACTIVISION GAME ONLY IN COMBINATION WITH CONTROLLERS PROVIDED BY ACTIVISION OR OTHER AUTHORIZED CONTROLLERS. ACTIVISION ALSO AUTHORIZES USE OF THIS CONTROLLER ONLY WITH AN ACTIVISION GAME PRODUCT OR OTHER AUTHORIZED PRODUCT. ANY OTHER USE IS PROHIBITED AND NO OTHER LICENSE, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, IS GRANTED.





## Alienware finally in SA!

Latest range of high-performance desktop and notebooks available locally

**THE NEW ALIENWARE RANGE**, which includes the Aurora and Aurora ALX desktops, and the M15x and M17x notebooks, will now be distributed by Pinnacle Micro in South Africa. This is exciting news for us gamers. Not only do we get to finally buy one of these monsters with our local currency, but they also come with a one-year, on-site next business day warranty, which is extendable up to three years. You might have to pawn everything you own to buy one of these rigs, but we're committed gamers, so we will do what we must to feed our passion.

Here are the juicy details announced at The Tokyo Game Show:

- **Alienware M15x** – the Alienware M15x laptop joins the M17x, which was launched in June this year. Sporting Alienware's acclaimed new mobile ID, which debuted with the M17x laptop, the M15x offers Alienware performance in a compact package, guaranteed to appeal to mobile enthusiasts and hardcore gamers on the go. The first Alienware laptop to feature a mobile Core i7 processor, the M15x also sports a 1GB NVIDIA GeForce GTX 260M GPU and up to 8GB of DDR3 1,333MHz memory to take on, and dominate, even the most intense game titles.

- **Alienware M17x** – the M17x laptop can now be configured with the power of the ATI Mobility Radeon HD 4870 in both single and ATI CrossFireX configurations for up to a 145% graphics performance increase. The result is an immersive, cinematic experience when playing the latest HD games and movies.
- **Alienware Aurora and Aurora ALX** – The Aurora is the most upgradeable and the Aurora ALX is the most powerful microATX desktop Alienware has ever created. Featuring the latest Intel Core i7 processors, including an optional Extreme Edition overclocked to 3.6GHz, the Aurora line of desktops is designed to deliver the power needed for hardcore gaming, pro-level HD audio and video editing, 3D animation and more. To crank up your gaming performance, the Aurora and Aurora ALX can be configured with dual 1GB ATI Radeon HD 5870 graphics cards, up to 24GB of DDR3 1,333MHz memory or 12GB of DDR3 1,600MHz memory, respectively, and up to 2TB of hard drive storage – all in a compact microATX chassis, which takes up less desk space.

All Alienware desktops also come with CPU liquid cooling right out of the box.

### Snippets

The new **Zune HD** can be personalised. You can customise it with five exclusive colours, your choice of an artist design or Xbox 360 game logo, plus text engraving on the back.

Computers Only launched their **Phoenix Custom PC** at rAge. This gaming computer includes an XFX graphics card, Western Digital Velociraptor 10,000rpm hard drive and ROCCAT gaming peripherals.

The new version of the **Razer DeathAdder** gaming mouse now sports an improved 3G infrared sensor, which allows the mouse sensitivity to be upped to 3,500dpi. It also has a tangle-free, braided fibre cable.

**Asetek liquid-cooling** technology has been selected by Dell's premier gaming brand, Alienware to drive the extreme performance of the Alienware Aurora and Area-51 systems to higher levels. This will allow gamers, enthusiasts and performance-computing professionals to safely push these systems to extreme overclocking speeds.

### NAG Awards

**DREAM MACHINE:** We have a dream. That only the best hardware gets this hot chick, waving her derriere in the air like she just don't care.

**HARDWARE:** Ever wonder why it's called hardware? If something has this award, then someone got hard for the ware.



### Hardware Scoring System

Our hardware scoring system is based on the reviewer's expert opinion. The scale is from 1 to 5 with no fractional values. Each number has a specific meaning, described below. Most products will score 3 or 4, with the occasional 5 or 2, and almost never 1. Note that a high price alone can never lower a score below 3.

- 5 The stuff of Legends.** Buy it while you can, we already have.
- 4 A good deal;** worth it if you're shopping for one.
- 3 What you'd expect,** no problems. You might want to wait for a sale.
- 2 This has some issues.** You should shop around for something else.
- 1 The stuff of Nightmares.** You'll be sorry you got one, even for free.



# Qosmio X500 Series

Featuring Intel's Core i7 and Windows 7, this enthusiast series of Toshiba notebooks is geared for high-definition multimedia and gaming. The 18.4-inch widescreen display and integrated Blu-ray drive are a gamer and movie fanatic's wishes come true.



# SteelSeries Siberia v2 Headset

The successor to the original Siberia Headset boasts superior speaker and microphone technology. The v2 has an 'invisible', retractable microphone that can be extracted from the left ear cup, while the increased 50mm speakers amplify the bass and overall volume. The frequency response has been increased to 10-28,000Hz. Two versions are available - with and without a USB virtual surround 7.1 soundcard.



# SanDisk Gaming Cards

SanDisk has a 2GB SD memory card, which can be used with your Nintendo Wii. They have also just launched a 16GB Memory Stick Micro for use with the PSP Go, a 32GB Memory Stick PRO Duo and PRO-HG Duo card for the Sony PSP, and an 8GB SDHC card for use with a Nintendo DSi. These cards can be used to store movies, music, photos and downloaded Internet content without the media taking up valuable space on your gaming console's hard drive.



# Mede8er

Media enthusiasts, listen up. Enjoy your movies, pictures, camcorder videos, music and Internet radio at home or when you are on the go, on a HD multimedia player that supports the latest MKV/H264 codec. Media playback can be from a variety of sources, including a hard drive, USB drive, SD Card, Internet or local network.

[www.mede8er.com](http://www.mede8er.com) | R2,499 excluding hard drive



# PIRATING OF GAMES IS A CRIME!

# Don't Support Criminals! Report them!



sms  
Crime Line  
on  
32211

charged @ R1.00



AGAINST COPYRIGHT THEFT  
criminal SMS: 32211



YOUR ANONYMOUS CRIME TIP-OFF LINE

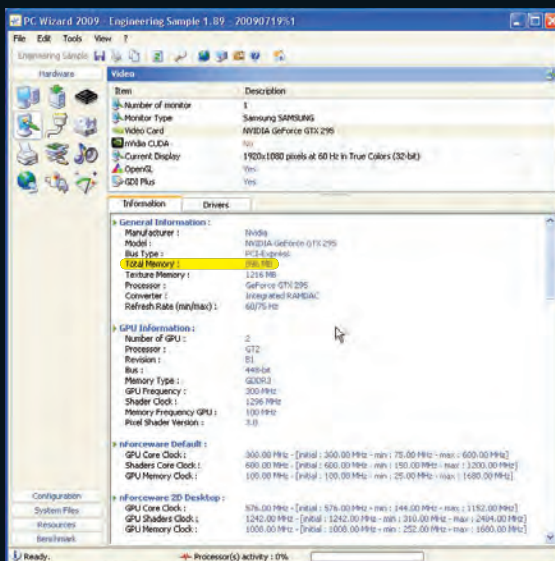


## GTX 295 VRAM QUESTION

**From:** Gordon Cooper

"I've recently acquired a Leadtech NVIDIA GeForce GTX 295 card, supposedly with 1,796MB of VRAM. However, every test I do (see attached images) shows it to have only 896MB of VRAM [although the PC Wizard software mentions some 'texture RAM']. The dealer that I bought the card from assures me that this is normal, but I am not convinced. How can I tell how much RAM is really on the card?"

**Neo:** The reported amount of RAM is correct. The 1,792MB of RAM is the total amount of RAM when you combine the VRAM of both GPUs. Actual useable VRAM is 896MB because in SLI mode, all data (textures, models, shaders, etc.) is duplicated on both cards. So, physically there's 1,792MB, but the system can only address 896MB of that RAM.



## XONAR ESSENCE ST / Z-5500

**From:** Gilbert

"I have a Logitech Z-5500 speaker system and want to get myself the new Xonar Essence ST, because of your wonderful rating, but now I am worried that the speakers cannot connect to the card (it has three connections - rear speaker/front speaker/sub). The picture looks like it will not fit. Also, will it be worth the cash to add a sound card to your great speakers? Please advise. Thanks."

**Neo:** If you want to use your Z-5500 with the Essence ST and retain the surround sound options made available by your speakers, then you will need to use the optical connection on your speakers and on the sound card. The Essence ST doesn't support stereo output through any other connection method. As for your question about the value of adding an extra sound card to your speaker configuration, the truth is that it would.

## 775 IN 1 EXPRESS

"Is this PC worth something? Intel dual-core E5200 2.5GHz processor, 2GB DDR2 800MHz RAM and 256MB Intel GMA x4500 graphics. Can it at least play something like Plants vs. Zombies or Fable 1? Please help."

**Neo:** You could probably play those games, but Intel GMA graphics processors have really poor performance and some compatibility issues. Integrated Intel graphics chipsets are best avoided for gaming of any kind.

## OPENCL

**From:** Lawrence Makpu

"I would like to know if the 58 series from ATI supports OpenCL and is it linked to the hardware or is it in the drivers; and can it be used in any other ATI card. Please help; I [we] need to know if ATI finally has an answer for PhysX. Thanks for the great mag."

**Neo:** Well, ATI - at the time of writing - did not have an OpenCL driver, but by the time

you read this, there should be one available for the 5000 series, some 4000 series cards and a select number of 3000 series cards as well. As for how OpenCL relates to PhysX, it doesn't at all. OpenCL is a GPGPU API that runs on compatible hardware. It has no physics-simulation library or API within it at the moment (which is what PhysX is) and it remains to be seen how soon there will be one - if ever.

## GRAPHICS CARD

**From:** Clinton

"Hi. I need some advice. I have an 8800GTS (512MB) graphics card and I want to upgrade from this one to a GTX 260 (1,792MB). Do you think it would be worth it to upgrade to a GTX 260 (1,792MB)? And will this card work on a 500-watt power supply? Someone also told me that I wouldn't really see a big difference in performance. Right now, I'm actually confused because some people say this and others say that. I've heard many different things about this graphics card and other graphics cards. So now, I'm hoping that you can help me with this decision or maybe give me other suggestions on what to do. I would REALLY appreciate it."

**Neo:** The performance gain will depend entirely on the rest of your system. If your graphics card (8800GTS) was underpowered, then the GTX 260 will yield very similar results, as the bottleneck is on the host CPU side and not the graphics card. Assuming your CPU is up to the task, then the GTX 260 may be a worthwhile upgrade (depending on the games you play). As for the power supply, 500 watts doesn't say anything - no-name 500W power supplies are worst than brand name 350W PSUs. Having said that, a GTX 260 is significantly faster than an 8800GT.

## EXPERT ADVICE...

"Okay, you being in this industry [sic] for so long, I just need some quick advice. Gonna buy a new PC. Decided against the Core i7 for the E8500. I did some research and while [the] Core i7 excels

at everything, it does so in little-to-not-much [sic] when it comes to gaming. Will get a GTX 295. So, since games are mostly GPU-dependent, would the above CPU last for at least 2 years being able to play everything at maximum? I can't think of any games that would require a GTX 295 or E8500 as a minimum in a long time. So, what do you think?"

**Neo:** An E8500 would be a terrible idea right now; the upgrade path for LGA775 is very limited, while there's plenty of growth in the LGA1156 and LGA1366 platforms. Consider as well that a GTX 295 is essentially an SLI configuration and the i7 is better at handling the workload of two GPUs than a Core 2 Duo. I would strongly advise against a Core 2 Duo-based system right now if you have the option of an i7 or quad-core Phenom II X4.

## HD GAMING

**From:** Thomas

"What's up with the Samsung T260 price drop? I'm looking to buy this monitor, but I need to know if the price drop means that there is something better on the way? Thanks a lot..."

**Neo:** Well, there is always something better on the way. Samsung has a newer 27-inch model - hence the price drop of the T260. However, the T260 is still a brilliant monitor and well worth the investment.

## I NEED GAMING PC UPGRADE HELP!

**From:** Duncan Crafford

"I am a 15-year-old gamer (male) and for my 'sweet 16' I have decided to build myself a powerful gaming PC. But my problem is that I am not sure what components to get. I have a good budget of well over R16,000 and I am not sure what to get. I do not like the i7-920, but the rest is cool. Please will you help? PS: Awesome magazine and can you review the ATI 5870? They have it in the USA and have reviewed it and it looks awesome. Thanks again, your Pal (aka pumpkin)."

**Neo:** Look on the forums and ask around what you should get for R16,000. Some prefer AMD; others Intel. Gaming-wise, there really isn't much of a difference, as long as the graphics card is fast enough. The 920 is actually a good CPU. The 950 is not that much better, or at least not worth the price premium. A 975XE would 'consume' two thirds of your budget for the CPU alone. A system with a 920 CPU and a 5870 graphics card would be a great gaming rig.

**If you'd like our tech guru, Neo, to answer your hardware questions, send a mail to [lauren.dasneves@tidemedia.co.za](mailto:lauren.dasneves@tidemedia.co.za). There aren't any prizes for the letters we print, just simple and honest advice (that is, if we can even decipher the garbled e-mail we sometimes get). NAG**



# GIGABYTE™

GIGABYTE CHASSIS  
NOT JUST A CASE!



穩  
や  
か  
な  
力



User-friendly  
Architecture



Liquid Cooling  
Upgrade Primed



Free Enclosure &  
Built-in Dock



Internal Liquid System  
Space Provisions



Dual Exchangeable  
Side panels



Thoughtful Design

## SUMO 4112

THE STILL OF POWER

[www.gigabyte.com.tw](http://www.gigabyte.com.tw)

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| • Model No.              | GZ-FAEA41-CJB  |
| • Dimensions (W x H x D) | 205 x 522 x 500 mm   |
| • Colour / Weight        | Black / 11.3kg   |
| • Side Panels            | Vent / Transparent   |
| • Front bezel material   | Aluminum   |
| • Drive bays             | 5.25" x 4, 3.5" x 1 (external)<br>3.5" x 5 (internal)                |
| • Expansion slots        | 7  |
| • Form Factor            | CEB / ATX / Micro ATX  |
| • System fan (front)     | 1 x 12cm silent fan  |
| • System fan (rear)      | 2 x 12cm blue LED illuminated fan                                    |
| • I/O ports              | 1 x e-SATA/2 x USB 2.0/<br>1 x IEEE1394/ 1 x Audio Set<br>(AC'97/HD) |



For more information please visit [www.rectron.co.za](http://www.rectron.co.za) or call 0860 582 835 / For Support call our National Technical Support Line: 0861 788 789

**Johannesburg:**  
Tel: (011) 203 1000  
Fax: (011) 203 1940

**Cape Town:**  
Tel: (021) 555 8200  
Fax: (021) 555 7136

**Durban:**  
Tel: (031) 582 0200  
Fax: (031) 582 0280

**Port Elizabeth:**  
Tel: (041) 398 7082  
Fax: (041) 398 7135

**Bloemfontein:**  
Tel: (051) 430 0000  
Fax: (051) 430 1144





## Dream Machine

To dream the impossible dream ...  
to fight the unbeatable foe ... to bear  
with unbearable sorrow ... to run  
where the brave dare not go.

– Joe Darion

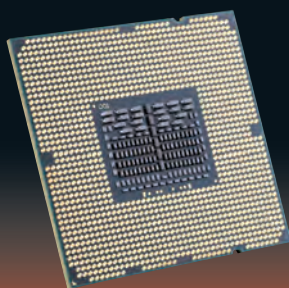
"What is important right now is  
that ATI has produced the fastest  
and most elegant GPU in history;  
and what that translates into is  
an unmatched performance and  
feature-set combination. The  
Radeon 5870 is the best GPU the  
world has ever seen."

– Neo Sibeko, page 98,  
ASUS EAH5870 review



### Headphones

Logitech G35 Surround Sound  
[www.logitech.com](http://www.logitech.com)



### Processor

Intel Core i7 Extreme 975  
[www.intel.com](http://www.intel.com)



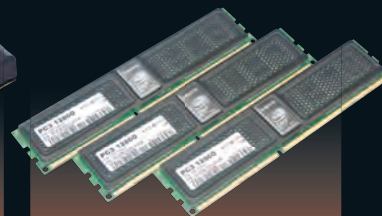
### Motherboard

GIGABYTE GA-EX58-EXTREME  
[www.gigabyte.co.za](http://www.gigabyte.co.za)



### Graphics Card

ASUS EAH5870  
<http://za.asus.com>



### Memory

OCZ Triple Channel PC12800 DDR3  
[www.ocztechnology.com](http://www.ocztechnology.com)



### Case

Cooler Master Cosmos S  
[www.coolermaster.com](http://www.coolermaster.com)



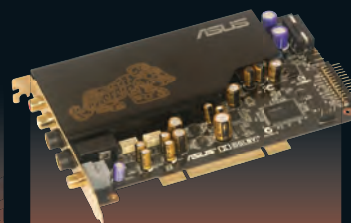
### Storage

Patriot Torqx 128GB SSD  
[www.patriotmemory.com](http://www.patriotmemory.com)



### Power Supply

IKONIK Vulcan 1,200W PSU  
[www.ikonik.com](http://www.ikonik.com)



### Sound

ASUS Xonar Essence ST  
<http://za.asus.com>



### Monitor

Samsung SyncMaster T260 LCD  
[www.samsung.co.za](http://www.samsung.co.za)



### Keyboard

Logitech G19  
[www.logitech.com](http://www.logitech.com)



### Mouse

Logitech G9x Laser  
[www.logitech.com](http://www.logitech.com)



### Cooling

Thermaltake BigWater 780  
[www.thermaltake.com](http://www.thermaltake.com)



Somewhere in this picture a sniper has a  
high velocity rifle trained right between  
**your eyes.**



Unless you're gaming on a Samsung EcoFit monitor, you're as good as dead. Its 50 000:1 contrast ratio produces sharper images, richer colours and extreme clarity that could just save your life.

Model codes: P2070 • P2270 • P2370  
Customer Contact Centre 0860 726 786. [www.samsung.com](http://www.samsung.com)

**SAMSUNG**





## Batman: The game that everybody else enjoyed while PC gamers fought

**L**ATELY, THERE'VE BEEN SOME arguments and debate about a specific multi-platform title and some technologies used in the game. *Batman: Arkham Asylum*, a great-looking game and one that plays even better.

For those who are not aware of the ruckus, the 'situation' started when an ATI employee wrote on his blog that NVIDIA (ATI's chief competitor) had a hand in disabling anti-aliasing when an ATI graphics card was detected by the game, therefore robbing the would-be ATI graphics card user from experiencing the game in the best way possible.

How said employee arrived at this conclusion was by changing the device IDs in the demo of the game to match that of an NVIDIA product. And by doing so, the option of enabling AA was available in the game, and it worked well.

Inevitably, accusations came flooding in that NVIDIA was intentionally putting ATI customers at a disadvantage by paying the game studios to disable certain features when a non-NVIDIA graphics card was detected.

The second issue arose when, with the latest driver, the release notes [or at least an employee of NVIDIA] stated that it would no longer be possible to run an ATI graphics card for rendering while using an NVIDIA card purely for physics. Besides that, very few people were using this configuration [it isn't easy to set up at all]. Others felt that NVIDIA was again trying to increase their margins by forcing people to have NVIDIA hardware only, if they are to enjoy hardware-accelerated physics in their games.

Now, these may seem like real concerns that should get people up in arms. However, such sentiment only comes from the misinformation that is on the Internet, fuelled by the blinding fanaticism and overstated self-importance. Harsh words maybe, but it's true. It's amazing how untruths spread faster than fact. How ignorance is infectious while knowledge isn't, especially when dealing with dedicated PC gamers who, above all, believe they are somehow better or feel more entitled than their console counterparts.

So then, what is the truth? Well, it's simple. In fact, so much so that some find it hard to believe because the answer is just too obvious. Without going into too much detail, this is the situation.

*Batman* uses the Unreal Engine 3.5, but the Unreal Engine 3.X does not support AA [or at least multi-sample AA or MSAA]. Yes, you can use another AA method like FSAA or SSAA (Full Scene AA or Super Sampling AA), but these are very slow, have a massive performance hit and are inefficient because they essentially render the frame many times larger than it is. Interpolate and shrink the frame back to the correct size. This works in smoothing out objects on screen, but has many side effects like loss in sharpness, speed penalties and so forth. However, for the most part, if push comes to shove, FSAA or SSAA can always be used regardless of the game or engine.

With that said, NVIDIA [as part of their TWIMTBP programme] worked with the developers in getting MSAA working in the game for their hardware. This implementation of MSAA in the game also happens to work for ATI parts [at least in the demo]. However, the game developer

cannot guarantee that it will always work with ATI hardware. As such, AA is only enabled on NVIDIA hardware, since this has been tested thoroughly and guaranteed to work well with no anomalies or bugs.

Nothing ever prevented ATI from working with the developers in making sure they, too, have a working and validated AA implementation for their hardware. [This actually costs time and money to do.] However, said ATI employee was only looking at how they were short-changed. Fans then rallied behind this and accused NVIDIA of unfair practices and putting them at a disadvantage.

The truth is, if ATI wants AA in *Batman: Arkham Asylum*, they are more than welcome to fund that process; but it should not and cannot fall on the competition to do it for them.

As for the physics issue, well, when hardware PhysX was released, NVIDIA stated clearly that they had no intention of supporting mixed-vendor PhysX acceleration. Why NVIDIA didn't block this configuration until now is something only they would know. However, what is true is that technical support costs money. The fewer the variables, the easier it is to diagnose and administer a fix for a problem.

If all GPUs in a system use the same driver set, then the chances of errors are reduced and tech support calls are reduced, which eventually save resources. If a situation arises where the problem is actually with an ATI driver for that specific title or program and not the NVIDIA PhysX accelerator card, how long would it take to diagnose that issue and, more importantly, why should this possibly 'fall to' NVIDIA's technical support?

By the same token, would ATI offer to help anyone with their PhysX-acceleration issues in such a system where the problem could possibly be an NVIDIA driver?

The answer is no. So, before we pick up our pitchforks and crucify NVIDIA [or ATI for that matter], it will help to think about the situation as clearly as possible and remove our emotions from it all. There is no conspiracy. Both companies are in the business of making money before anything else. **NAG**

"Ignorance is infectious while knowledge isn't, **especially when dealing with dedicated PC gamers who, above all, believe they are somehow better** or feel more entitled than their console counterparts."



# Chaos.



# Order.

colour



## Handy Steno AH162 Colorfull

The Contemporary Fashion Metal Chain Bundled, Easy to attach Slim and Stylish Design with Convenience

size



## Handy Steno AH224

Ultra high storage capacity and performance User friendly Slim and compact, easy to carry Stylish look

speed



## Handy Steno AH522 200X

High performance, up to 200X Retractable USB connector Metallic Finish Gem-like LED light Slim metallic central frame design

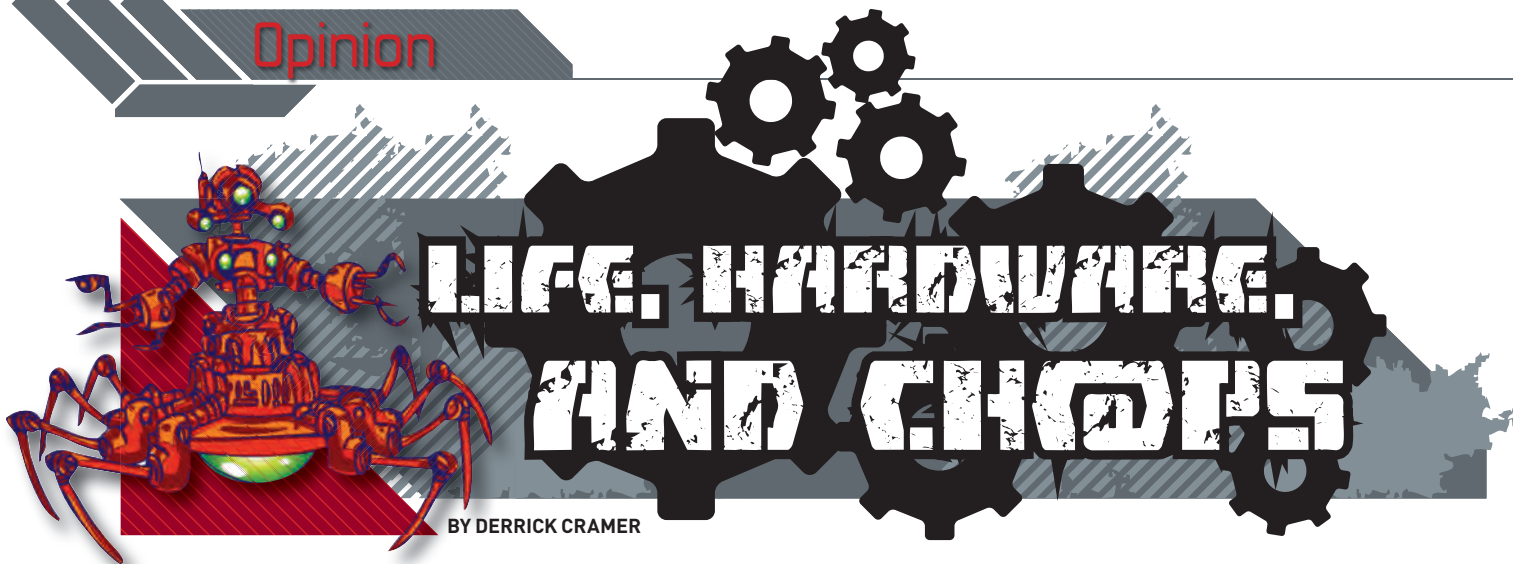
## Organize your life.

[www.apacer.com](http://www.apacer.com)

Apacer Distributor

**Pinnacle**  
MICRO





## A look back at rAge

**R**AGE HAS COME AND gone, leaving behind it a 'wake' of freshly opened boxes that once housed new hardware, and row upon row of tables glad for the relieve [sic] the end of the three-day LAN brought with it. So, I guess you're wondering: who brought what, who bought what, and who broke what?

Let's start with the Expo, shall we? The hardware on display was interesting, to say the least. With a SAPPHIRE 5870 running *Need for Speed: Shift* on three screens at the Frontosa stand, and MSI P55 boards on display, the crowd had a good variety with which to amuse themselves. Possibly the greatest event ever in the history of rAge was the rep from MSI getting on stage to explain a new feature on MSI boards: a built-in operating system known as WINKI. "So Bob\*, explain to us what MSI's WINKI system is?" The Frontosa stand, with its massive box structure housing machines most would drool over, was impressive as always, and the R70,000 NAG rig up for grabs made even a hardened hardware enthusiast such as myself shed sweet tears of yearning. (Technically a freelancer can win that baby, right Ed?) All the hardware exhibitors were worthy of praise; and honestly, I cannot think of a single stand that failed to impress me.

The retailers brought their triple-A games to the table with regard to prices this year. Each one had a few good deals to get the crowds amped up. Congrats must be awarded to Carlo and the crew at Computersonly: always up for a bit of a haggle, one could often walk away from their stand with hardware and cash to spare. Next up, Incredible Connection. Known for higher than average prices, the guys at IC really came to the party with incredibly well-priced graphics cards. A pleasant surprise to all, they made a customer out of me. Next up, Look & Listen. One of the most active stores at rAge 2009, the range of Skullcandy headphones was unbelievable, and the quality of the Skullcandy products (not to mention the salesman on the Saturday) was superb.

On to the LAN. What an experience! True to my word, I arrived on the Friday morning with my 51kg worth of hardware and struggled like crazy to get inside and set up. Once the scramble was over, and the 26" screen was set up in front of the 30kg case, it was time to inspect the competition. LCD screens 'stretched' as far as the eye could see, 'outweighing' the old CRT many times over – a true

testament to the recent price drops. By far the most popular size was 22-24" with 19-20" making a good show of things, and the ever-steady CRT bringing up the rear. A technology that will soon die out, I expect less than 5% of LANners at rAge 2010 will be using CRTs. Just remember, you heard it here first.

Hard drive space was another telltale sign of the times, with many PC users 'sporting' over 2TB with ease. Soon, almost all gamers will have over 1TB in their rig; and with that much space, who knows how they'll fill all of it? Cases were what you would expect: gamer-style mid-sized towers with enough neon to rename The Dome "Little Tokyo" – not to mention Perspex galore. You could build an arc with all of that stuff. Once you'd built said arc, you would have no trouble filling it to the brim with the gaming peripherals. Logitech and Razer, two by two, with a Cybersniper and OCZ equalizer to add a bit of flavour. You could even make room for the rare Sennheiser and... Okay, I'll stop now.

Everything said and done, the NAG LAN was enjoyed by all, except by the guy whose girlfriend knocked his PC off the table with a menacing crash. It worked (for the most part) afterwards, though, so no harm done.

We are too quick to blame hardware when it gives 'issues'. Very seldom do we pay it tribute for working after the torture it endured on a weekend such as rAge. Bend down and give your PC a fat, wet one tonight. It did 'good', real 'good' [sic]. **NAG**

"Cases were what you would expect: **gamer-style mid-sized towers with enough neon to rename The Dome "Little Tokyo"** – not to mention Perspex galore."

\* Not his real name



# WIN a Parltones Notebook!



The Parltones recommend GIGABYTE Notebooks



SMSes charged at R5 each  
Competition closes 30 November 2009  
Winners will be notified by SMS  
Judges' decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into

# GIGABYTE™



# LUCKY 7s

So, does Windows 7 really blast Vista into the weeds when it comes to gaming performance? Russell Bennett takes on the challenge to find out for sure.

**B**Y NOW YOU'VE ALL heard and perhaps even experienced firsthand all the performance claims swirling about the Web centred on Windows 7. You've questioned the 30% faster boot time (seems about accurate, mostly), the stories of a slicker and more responsive user interface (mostly true, sometimes not at all), and the whispers of improved multitasking efficiency (debatable).

But what we're interested in, of course, is one thing: pure gaming power. Does Windows 7 boost your favourite games a single iota; and if so, is the improvement really worth the cost of the upgrade? That's what I want to know. All of the pretty new features are nice, yes, but the OS will quickly be stripped bare and looking just like Vista did with similar pared-down settings on my gaming rig, in the quest for frame rate improvements in whatever I happen to be playing at the time. I'm sure most of you are the same...

So, all we want to know is whether upgrading to Windows 7 will run games faster than Vista or XP? Does it have the stability for a reliable gaming platform? Do games work

all right on Windows 7, or are there issues? And finally, what's the value for a gamer in buying a whole new Windows release, if any?

With finding you the answers to these questions in mind, I added a third partition to my primary system to make my machine a triple-boot affair, two of which are Windows partitions so I could test the Microsoft OSes side by side, on identical hardware, for a meaningful comparison. And Windows XP? It's irrelevant in gaming: its inability to run games on DX10 code proves fatal.

Speaking of the hardware, my test system is no longer any better than mid-range, to be honest, so I'm not just throwing brand-new hardware at the new OS to make it fly. In fact, the X58-based motherboard, QX9770 CPU, 2GB of DDR3 1,333MHz RAM and Radeon 4870 could prove Windows 7's downfall if any weaknesses exist in supporting strange hardware elements. But let's get right to it.

## GENUINE ADVANTAGE?

Naturally, our first test had to be the 'gaming synthetic', 3DMark Vantage. With no NVIDIA

drivers installed, this benchmark doesn't accelerate its physics using the GPU, so we were expecting a pretty reliable result. Reliable it was; clear it was not. Windows 7 gets the nod by Futuremark on my rig, although just barely with a result of 9,729 versus 9,558 on Vista.

The GPU score was all but identical: the 200-point gain came from the CPU side, which we'd attribute to the fact that Windows 7 uses fewer precious system resources while Vista tends to hog RAM a bit. Still, hardly a decisive victory in this bench.

But we all know that these synthetics can be deceptive. It's in real-world gaming applications that we'll really see what's going on 'in this comparison'. For the purposes of this test, we've chosen a typically eclectic mix of titles, spanning various genres to benchmark with. The latest in the *Need for Speed* franchise, *Shift*, is getting a lot of playtime at the moment and is quite heavy on resources, while *Wolfenstein* isn't particularly demanding, but is a good indication of how a mid-range 3D shooter copes. Or is it?





*Demigod* represents the RTS, albeit without the huge unit counts which normally hammer a CPU, while *Street Fighter IV*'s fast-paced fighting action quickly highlights lagging components with in-play slowdowns. Finally, *PROTOTYPE* does the 'huge world thing' just fine. Again, the engine might not be the absolute latest tech, but it does push hardware when cranked up to 1,600 x 1,200 with 4x AA enabled.

## RACING

Let's start with the racer. *NFS: Shift* is more of a simulator than recent incarnations, with highly advanced physics and premium graphics combining to create a totally immersive racing game. However, the one thing that destroys this quality is lag. Jerky responses to your input in an accomplished simulator are 'death', and utterly ruin the impression of realism, not to mention your ability to control the game effectively.

Running at our standard gaming resolution of 1,280 x 1,024 with no AA and everything set to high, except for shadows (it is only a 4870, after all), both systems seem to cope all right. But analysing the Fraps data afterwards of a quick race on Silverstone with ten opponents at dawn, in a Lamborghini Murcielago V12 incidentally, reveals that there is a difference in the way the OS handles the title.

*Shift* is happiest on Windows 7. And not by an insignificant amount either, averaging 55fps in this environment and 47fps in Vista, which is enough to be felt in the game at moments of tough-to-control slowdown. You're definitely better off upgrading if you want to play *Shift* at its finest.

In fact, *Shift* is the title that eventually forced my full-time move over to Windows 7 in the first place. At its original patch level, the game was pretty much unplayable in

Vista. I'd cranked everything to low and then got acceptable frame rates, but it looked like a five-year-old racing game. The release of the first patch has definitely helped here, closing the gap but still unable to equalise the environments fully.

## FIGHTING

I included *Street Fighter IV* in this benchmark run for a similar reason. Originally, under Vista, the title had struggled at higher resolutions (1,600 x 1,200, 4x AA), while Windows 7 managed to run it at this rate from the off. A friend's even older rig has seen an average frame rate jump of 15 'switching' to Windows 7 in this game - pretty impressive for just an OS upgrade.

But when it came to testing, the Capcom title inexplicably got over itself. There are no latest patches to blame this on. Perhaps the updated drivers that were downloaded and installed specifically for this test were the culprit, but in the end, *Street Fighter IV* is virtually indistinguishable in Vista and Windows 7. Both ran the game 'bouncing off' its benchmark frame limit of 75fps (in-game it runs at just 60fps) at the maximum possible detail setting: 1,600 x 1,200, 4x AA, everything high. Clearly, it isn't the most demanding title, but after the *Shift* results, this neck-and-neck finish was a surprise.

## STRATEGISING

*Demigod* may be fatally flawed as a game, but is nevertheless strangely addictive - much like the title it's ultimately based on: *DotA Allstars*. We ran our benchmark 4v4 on the tough 'Exile' map, and made sure to include 'graphically

trying' characters like the Torch Bearer, with the AI set to 'think' at Nightmare levels for maximum CPU drainage.

Intriguingly, here our results from *Shift* are reversed, although the variance is smaller and therefore more of a nominal victory for Vista. Nevertheless, the older environment manages a stellar average of 88fps at 1,280 x 1,024 with everything set to high and no AA. This compares favourably against Windows 7's average result of 85.6fps, which it churned out repeatedly over several benchmark runs (which we carried out just to make sure what we were seeing was right).

You can actually 'feel' it in the game. Oddly, Vista seems slightly slower visually, but with less frame 'troughs' when the action gets furious. Additionally, *Demigod* on Windows 7 isn't entirely stable. Nor is it on Vista really, but it's definitely better, with flaws only manifesting themselves after several battles in a row. Windows 7 would occasionally crash out on the first fight of the night, leaving you looking for something else to play!

## MASS MURDERING

This quirky but awesome title, *PROTOTYPE*, is built on another aging engine ultimately, but is a great combo of a huge world smattered with copious amounts of detritus (sorry, civilians) and packed with frantic action scenes. We benchmarked the opening tank-destroying 'warm-up' sequence on both machines, running at 1,280 x 1,024, 4x AA and everything set to high.

And the result? Chalk up a 2-1 lead to the new player, albeit another comparatively





nominal result. Vista gets 48.2fps, Windows 7 manages 51.5fps. It's not decisive, but it's a result. Intangible in the game, but we're happy. Next up?

### RUNNING AND GUNNING

As addicted to Nazis and the supernatural as we are, *Wolfenstein* was our first choice for benchmarking, but with both systems slamming up against the 60fps limiter with ease, it was back to an old favourite instead, although we could have just disabled this frame cap. But *UT3* remains a gorgeous and challenging game, so we ran the CTF-Core bot battle at 1,280 x 1,024, with all detail set to high and in DX10 mode instead.

Under Vista, we managed a good 90.25fps in this test. But under Windows 7, things were much better still. This was the most definitive gap we experienced throughout our testing processes; an average of 117.47fps for the newer OS, running DX10 code with the same detail settings. That's an impressive gain indeed - more than 25% in fact, which to our eyes would be well worth the price of upgrading alone. If it were consistent, across the board, of course.

Still, that's a second clear victory for Windows 7 in real-world gaming. We think we're starting to see a pattern emerging at this point...

### FLYING

Tom Clancy's *H.A.W.X.* is hardly realistic, but it does look good. And it has a built-in benchmark run, which suits our requirements perfectly. Standard resolution, 2x AA and everything set to high did the 'ticket',

specifically running the DX10 executable, and after the missile and explosion-filled demo scene had run its course, the results were, well, again inconclusive.

In fact, the average frame rate was identical: 57fps on both OSes. Visually the Windows 7 environment seemed to render faster when there wasn't a lot of action on the screen, but was then more punctuated by pauses when the missiles had been locked, loaded, and launched all over the screen. It also seemed to render higher quality ground-texture details at longer distances. Under Vista, you could occasionally see the edges of the detail on the ground map, while under Windows 7, it just faded more naturally into the middle distance.

### FINAL NOTES

There are a couple of things to note here. First, all of the games that worked under Vista worked under Windows 7, so there doesn't appear to be any compatibility issues with games. Second, although gaming performance is only marginally better on the newer OS, after running Windows 7 for a few weeks now as the primary boot partition, the initial load time of the OS felt interminable when dropping back to the Vista install. Particularly the stage after login which saw the machine sitting responsive but barely so for long seconds, where the Windows 7 system was already loading up the next benchmark.

Finally, there are inconsistencies in Windows 7. Memory leaks and application issues. Don't try using Safari 4, for instance,







especially not if you're a heavy browser user like me. It soon runs out of memory and then refuses to use the swap file for more, which is a problem. As for games, some titles (*Mirror's Edge* is the most obvious culprit) don't exactly like the way that Windows 7 handles memory. This inventive title works fine for a couple of runs, but then starts to bog down and jerk terribly, making the game all but unplayable on the third, which must again be a result of RAM handling, as it doesn't suffer this issue under Vista.

### CONCLUSION

However, on the whole, it must be said that the new MS environment **is** faster, for games specifically, than Vista ever was. After a total of six real-world games, Windows 7 returned the higher average frame rate in three of them. Only one went the way of Vista, with the remaining two absolutely deadlocked.

In some cases, notably *UT3* and *NFS: Shift*, the difference was rather marked; the kind of variance you wouldn't normally associate with so 'minor' a system upgrade as a new OS! Normally doubling your RAM or perhaps putting a 15% OC on your CPU would yield these sorts of improvements, so of course, you can still do this if you want even further performance gains under Windows 7.

And that, as they say, is a wrap. Windows 7 really **is** a faster gaming platform than Windows Vista. And compared to XP? Well, XP wouldn't have run several of the titles we tested with using their DX10 code paths, which to us puts it way behind, regardless of frame rates... **NAG**



### Results

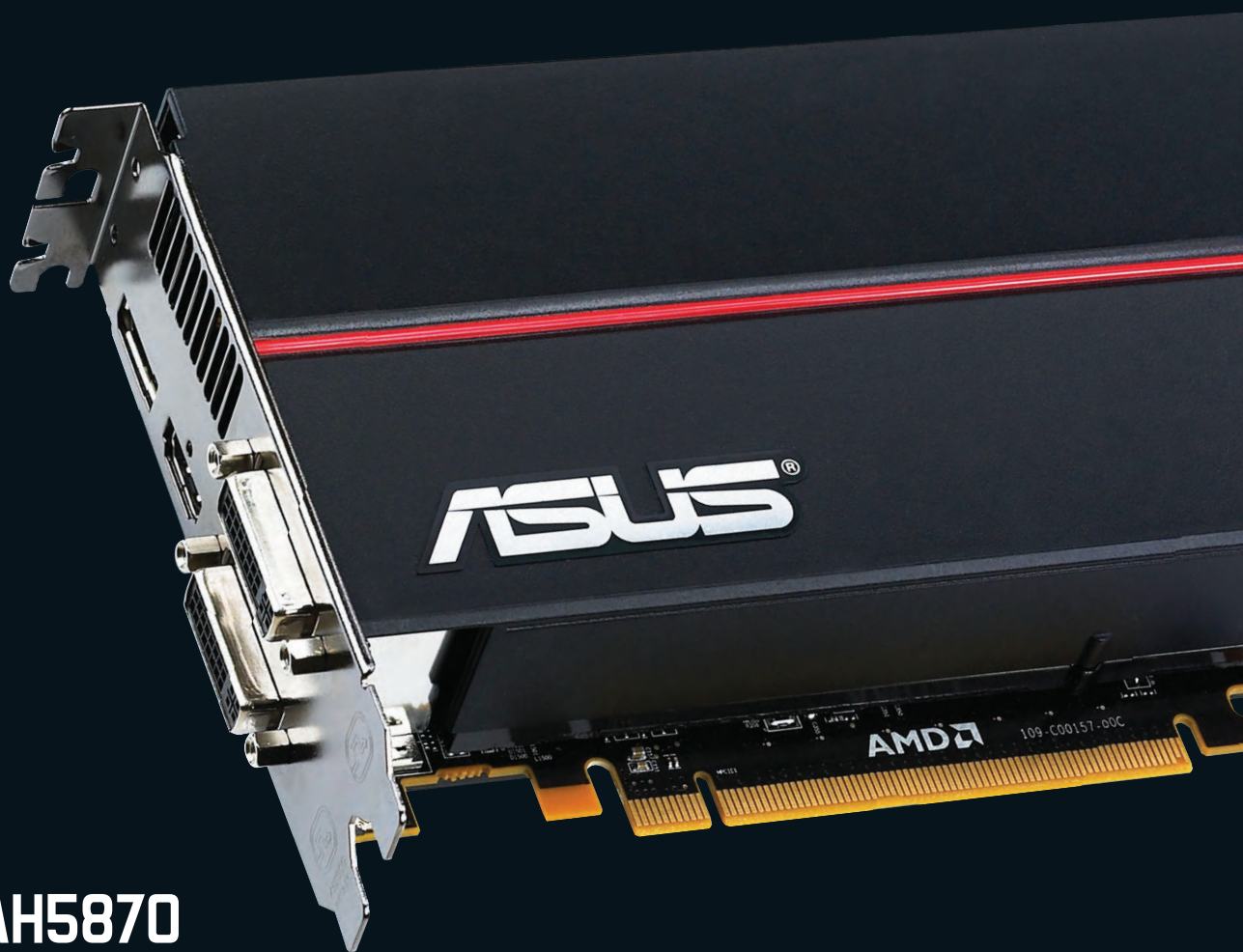
| Title                 | Code path | Windows 7 | Windows Vista |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|---------------|
| 3DMark Vantage        |           |           |               |
| Need for Speed: Shift | DX10      | 9,729     | 9,558         |
| Street Fighter IV     | DX10      | 55fps     | 47fps         |
| Demigod               | DX9       | 75fps     | 75fps         |
| UT3                   | DX10      | 85.6fps   | 88fps         |
| Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X. | DX10      | 117fps    | 90fps         |
| PROTOTYPE             | DX10      | 57fps     | 57fps         |
|                       | DX9       | 51.5fps   | 48.2fps       |

### SYSTEM DETAILS:

**Motherboard:** Intel BT2 Extreme X58  
**CPU:** Core 2 Quad Extreme 9770, stock 3.2GHz per core  
**Memory:** 2 x Corsair 1GB DDR3 1,333MHz RAM  
**GPU:** Radeon 4870 512MB  
**PSU:** 600W  
**Sound:** Sound Blaster audio







## ASUS EAH5870

**ATI HAS BEEN PROMISING** the follow up to their brilliant Radeon 4000 series graphics cards for a while. When ATI said they would have products ready on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, not only would the NDAs be lifted, but the cards would be available. And they were (something that rarely ever happens with new generations of graphics cards). The only thing that was not available was a supporting driver on the Website, but the packaged driver worked just fine.

Aside from that small issue, it's been smooth sailing for ATI and their new graphics behemoth thus far. Let it be said right now [sic] that the 5870 is the fastest, single-GPU card ever made. While many would have expected this to be, the real importance of the 5870 for ATI is that the company has not had the fastest single-GPU solution since 2005 with the Radeon X1950XTX card. With the 5870, however, ATI has released not only the fastest GPU they have ever designed, but the biggest and most advanced GPU the industry has ever seen.

To say that the 5870 GPU is an evolution of what the Radeon 4890 was would be fairly accurate, but it would not be getting [sic] the entire picture. For instance, for the first time ever we have truly angle-independent anisotropic filtering. Previous GPUs had near perfect filtering, but this time the 5870 has it perfect. This will not affect many people, but for those

who care, you will be happy to see that image quality doesn't get better than on the 5870.

Technically, as stated before, the 5870 GPU is an evolution of the Radeon 4890 or RV790. It is, however, not just linear scaling of the GPU that has taken place here: the GPU has been redesigned to support OpenGL 3.X, OpenCL 1.X, DirectX 11 and, subsequently, Compute Shaders. So, as far as API support and programmability go, the Cypress GPU is again the most advanced GPU in history.

Comparing the RV790 core and the Cypress core helps one understand the incredible work that ATI has been doing, as the company has produced an ASIC that is more than twice the size of their previous-generation GPU. The GPU has an impressive 2.15 billion transistors. Yes, you read that correctly. It is even bigger than the massive GT200b core from the competition; significantly so even. With that comes some changes that lend themselves to incredible theoretical performance numbers, but more than that, the actual performance in applications cannot be understated.

Compared to the RV790 core, the new GPU has twice the stream processors (1,600 vs. 800 in the RV790), twice the render outputs (32 vs. 16), and twice the Texture samplers (80 vs. 40). That should give you some idea of the kind of

rendering power that the 5870 is capable of. Consider, as well, that while the gate count is more than twice that of the RV790, it has around 230 million more transistors (the size of the NV40 core, for example). That is quite a substantial amount of real estate, and we can only speculate that some of these gates went into adding functionality that is related more to general-purpose computing than outright rendering performance. (We will keep you updated on this as we receive more information on the GPU and its variations.) As for performance numbers, if you are not convinced that the 5870 is in a class of its own, let it be known that, since the release of the Radeon 5870, it has claimed the 3DMark03, 3DMark05, 3DMark06 and 3DMark Vantage world records – in both multi-GPU and single-GPU configurations. Not only were these records broken, but the numbers were significantly higher than the previous records. Kingpin, the number-one-ranked overclocker, managed jaw-dropping scores when using the yet-to-be-released Intel Core i9 Extreme (six cores, 12 threads) CPU and three 5870 graphics cards in 3-Way CrossFire mode.

At the time of writing, the 3DMark05 record was set at a hard-to-believe 58,125 points, which is just staggering. However, what is arguably the most amazing score ever recorded in any of the Futuremark





## Specifications

**GPU:** Cypress, 40nm TSMC High-K (850MHz)  
**Memory:** 1GB 256-bit GDDR5 (1,200MHz)  
**API Support:** OpenGL 3.X, OpenCL, DirectX 11, Stream  
**Interface:** PCI Express 2.0

benchmarks is the 209,570 3DMark03 score. To put that into perspective, a single Radeon 4890 graphics card with a highly overclocked Core i7 Extreme CPU results in a score of around 80,000 points. As if that's not impressive enough, in 3DMark Vantage, using the Enthusiast profile, the new record was set at E95, 173 – nothing has come even close to that score before.

If synthetic benchmarks are not enough to convince you of the power of the 5870, the game performance is much better than we had expected. For the most part, the 5870 is faster than the 4870X2, which is an incredible card, but placed next to the 5870, it's fairly obvious where the power lies. Not only is the 5870 much faster than any other single-GPU solution on the market, but it uses the least amount of power while idling – stated at

an impressive 22W. We have yet to find any fault with the 5870 even with the early Beta drivers. It is simply brilliant.

Being the enthusiast and technology fans we are, we cannot help but imagine the kind of power the X2 version of the 5870 will have. A single GPU right now pushes out a theoretical 2.1 teraFLOPS of computational power. With an X2 card, this could, in theory, increase to 4.2 teraFLOPS, making it the smallest supercomputer available.

However, we will leave that for another time. What is important right now is that ATI has produced the fastest and most elegant GPU in history; and what that translates into is an unmatched performance and feature-set combination. The Radeon 5870 is the best GPU the world has ever seen.

**NAG**  
**Neo Sibeko**



### Bottom Line

The Radeon 5870 is the fastest single GPU ever made.

#### Plus

+ Performance  
 + Feature set

#### Minus

- Card length

# Gaming is not for everyone

Parents complaining all the time about your gaming hours...

There's never enough hard drive space...

Grades slipping thanks to Fallout 3...

Don't understand all the new hardware specifications...

Getting owned by n00bs...

Tired of not being able to click past video sequences...

Using the wrong ingredients for your potions...

Upgrading the MG42 just isn't killing enough zombies...

Wondering which graphics card to buy...

Looking to get into game development...

Nobody understands your obsession...

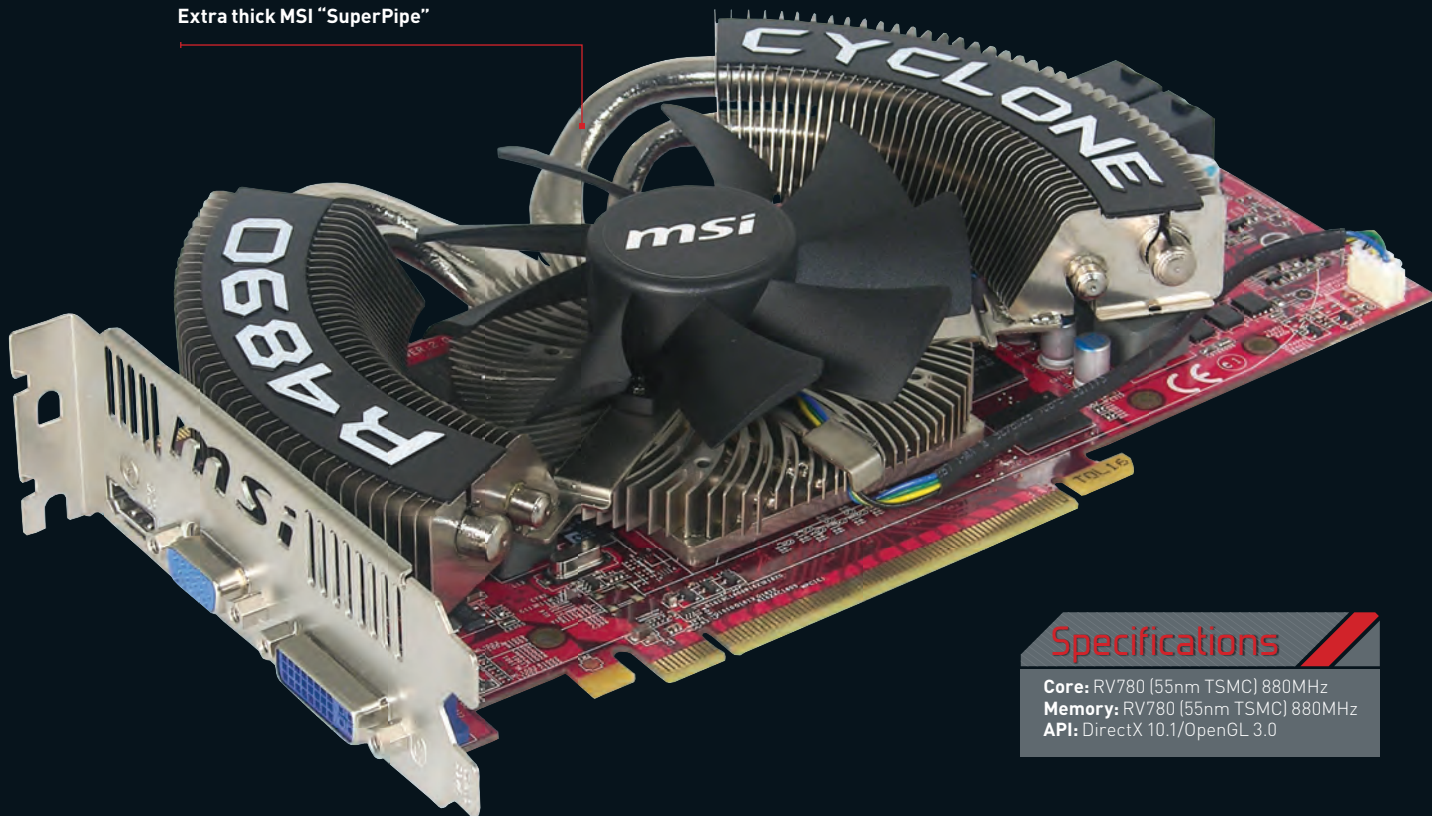
Tea-bagging n00bs just isn't fun anymore...

**Come visit us; we understand...**  
<http://forums.tidemedias.co.za/nag/>





Extra thick MSI "SuperPipe"



## Specifications

**Core:** RV780 [55nm TSMC] 880MHz  
**Memory:** RV780 [55nm TSMC] 880MHz  
**API:** DirectX 10.1/OpenGL 3.0

## MSI Radeon R4890 Cyclone OC

**YOU'RE NOT SEEING DOUBLE.** We have indeed reviewed an MSI Radeon 4890 graphics card before. However, this card is part of the Cyclone series of graphics cards; and with that, there are a number of changes, which make this possibly the best 4890 series of graphics cards to date.

The graphics card that we received for review is the least powerful 4890 in the Cyclone series. However, that doesn't mean that it's slow. In fact, it's one of the fastest 4890s we have ever tested and is certainly faster than the standard 4890 OC edition from MSI. Much like the Lightning range of graphics cards, based on NVIDIA GPUs, the Cyclone series cards are as different to the standard reference card as can be.

The R4890 Cyclone OC features the traditional, red PCB of ATI cards, but you would be wrong if you believed this to be a reference PCB. It's not. It is similar in design, but features some enhancements that make it a little more robust than the standard card. These include solid-state chokes and capacitors, a seven-phase power system, and a custom cooler that is unmatched by any other 4890 on the market that isn't liquid cooled.

The Cyclone card features what MSI terms a "Cyclone Storm Style" cooler. Although it sounds gimmicky, it actually works very well. It's rather heavy, but

helps to keep the idle temperatures very low. It features a quad heat-pipe design with the two outermost pipes thicker than the inner ones. The base is made of copper and features fins as well. All this lends itself perfectly to a card that idles at 38°C in Windows 7. This is the lowest temperature we have ever recorded for a 4890 graphics card, and the Cyclone OC is possibly the quietest as well. Even with the fan speed turned up, the cooler is not as loud as the reference cooler with the fan set to 60%.

The card comes clocked at a healthy 880MHz core speed and 975MHz memory speed, but nothing prevents one from changing that to 900MHz and 1,000MHz respectively. The sad part about all of this, however, is that because MSI has gone with a custom PCB, it is not easy to change the GPU voltage to gain higher clock speeds. So, the most you will get out of this card is about 940MHz before it becomes too unstable and locks up.

This is not a heat issue at all, as the Cyclone cooler does more than enough already, but the GPU core doesn't receive enough voltage at the higher, overclocked frequencies. At the time of writing, MSI had just released their "Afterburner" tweaking utility, which allows voltage frequency and adjustments for the cards, but we were not able to get the software in time to

test its functionality on the 4890 Cyclone.

Other than this small issue, however, the MSI Radeon R4890 Cyclone OC is still a worthwhile card - even with the release of the Radeon 5000 series of graphics cards. The price is also likely to be lower than that of the 5850, which means that the 4890 can be had for an even lower price.

There's not much to fault the 4890 Cyclone on. If you want the high-end version, look out for the SOC edition. It features a 1GHz core clock and offers even better performance than the OC version. With that said, the Radeon R4890 Cyclone OC is still a great card and well worth the purchase. And if you have cash to spare, two for a CrossFire setup would be even better. **NAG**

Neo Sibeko



### Bottom Line

Cooltest Radeon 4890 on the market and one of the fastest.

#### Plus

- + Pre-overclocked
- + Low operating temperatures

#### Minus

- No way to change GPU voltage



**100% FREE**  
to  
**Traders &  
Private Sellers!**

**Junk Mail**  
YOUR KING OF CLASSIFIEDS  
PRINT • ONLINE • MOBILE

**1000's of Ads LIVE**

**NOW!**



**ALL FREE ONLINE...**

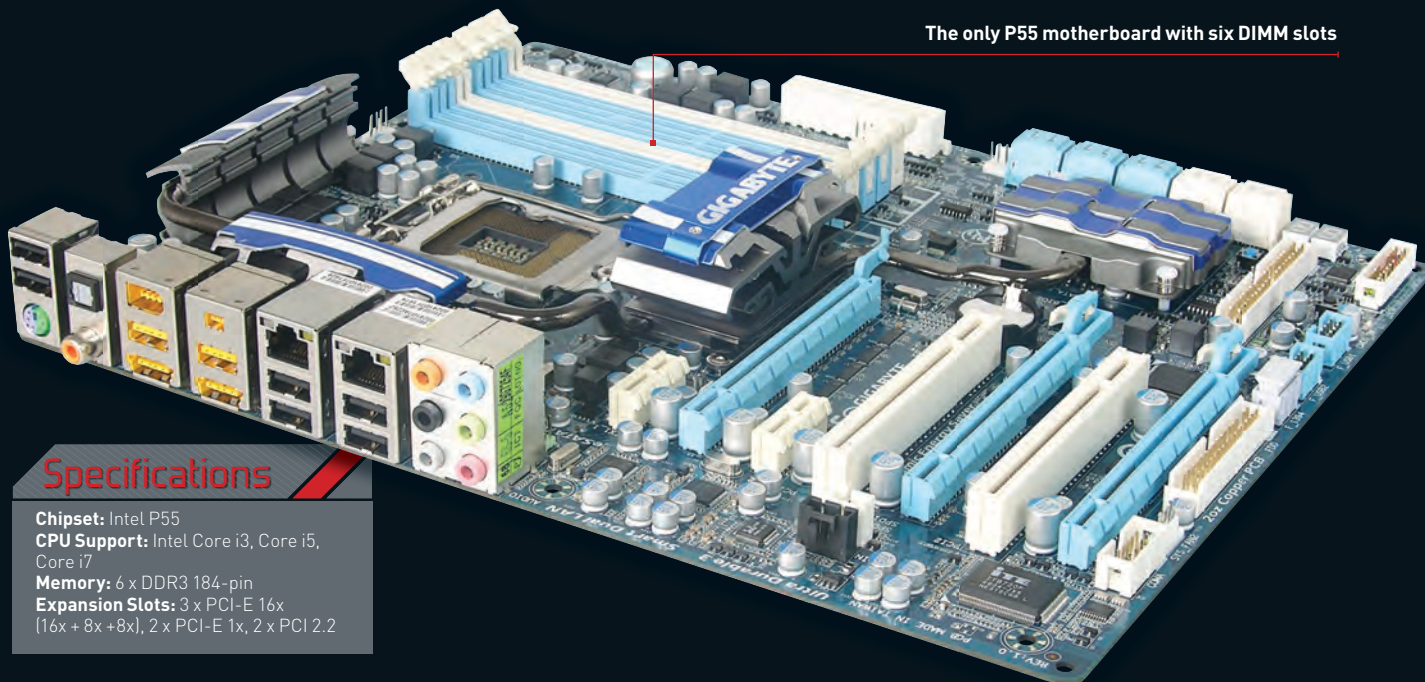
**www.junkmail.co.za**

**SEARCH**

**...BUY SELL OR SWAP IMMEDIATELY**



The only P55 motherboard with six DIMM slots



## Specifications

**Chipset:** Intel P55  
**CPU Support:** Intel Core i3, Core i5, Core i7  
**Memory:** 6 x DDR3 184-pin  
**Expansion Slots:** 3 x PCI-E 16x (16x + 8x + 8x), 2 x PCI-E 1x, 2 x PCI 2.2

## GIGABYTE GA-P55-UD6

**BY NOW, EVERYONE HAS** read the reviews of the new Intel Core i7 and Core i5 CPUs. Besides the initial 'irritation' of a new socket (LGA1156), new CPU coolers and, obviously, new motherboards, the reception has mostly been positive.

Another downside for those who had invested in triple-channel 6GB or 3GB sets for their eventual Core i7 upgrade was that they couldn't use all of their RAM, as the new CPU only features a dual-channel memory controller, instead of the triple-channel IMC found on the LGA1366 platform.

However, we'll discuss these changes to the CPU when we eventually review Intel's LGA1156 processors. Right now, however, we are looking at possibly the best LGA1156 motherboard available on the market. This may seem like a bold claim at first, but after tens of hours of testing, it's clear that we have a winner on our hands. We only wonder why some of the features present in this motherboard are not available on the LGA1366 motherboards.

The GIGABYTE GA-P55-UD6 features an industry-first 24-phase PWM engine. Indeed, Gigabyte has gone ahead and built a motherboard with 24 phases. While it's true that the number of phases is not as important as having quality MOSFETs, which not only switch quickly, tolerate a wider variety of temperatures and are capable of handling higher current levels, we cannot deny that having more phases allows for more stable power delivery even at the most extreme voltages, frequencies and temperatures. In terms of power delivery, the GA-P55-UD6 is

unmatched.

The GA-P55-UD6 features six DIMM slots instead of the typical four found on other P55 boards, which means (in theory anyway) that the GA-P55-UD6 has a maximum memory capacity of 24GB. As if that's not enough, the board supports Quad SLI, 3-Way and 2-Way SLI, 4-Way CrossFire, ten SATA 3Gb/sec ports (four courtesy of a secondary controller), dual Gigabit LAN, eight USB 2.0 ports, a POST LED and everything else that can be put on a motherboard. In a way, the GA-P55-UD6 has more features than any other motherboard GIGABYTE has released to date.

However, it doesn't stop there. The board also features an energy and security system that works with any Bluetooth-enabled phone, where your Bluetooth device can act like an access key and allow the PC to enter various power saving states as well.

It's unlikely that we will see a motherboard with more features than this one in the near future. With that said, all the features mentioned above are not as impressive as the overclocking ability of the motherboard. The GA-P55-UD6 will allow all CPUs to reach their limits long before the motherboard does. For instance, not only were we able to record a 247MHz BCLK on one i7-870 CPU, but another sample proved to only tolerate 225MHz, while the cheaper i5-750 was limited to 235MHz. These limitations are CPU limitations and this was evident in the hard lock-ups that we experienced after reaching those frequencies. Regardless of the VTT/QPI voltage or

cooling used, these were the limits.

However, quite a number of engineering-sample Core i7-870 CPUs have gone above the 270MHz mark, while retail samples don't seem to be as refined at present. Not only does the GA-P55-UD6 offer incredible overclocking legroom for the CPU, but the memory performance is brilliant as well. In fact, it's more efficient than on the triple-channel platform. The numbers are brilliant - better than AMD's memory performance index using a dual-channel IMC at the same speed.

The significance of all this cannot be understated; particularly the very high BCLK and memory speed frequencies (over 3GHz has been recorded). These figures suggest that even if one buys the lowliest Core i5-750 CPU with a low multiplier (20x 'normal' and 21x 'Turbo'), the CPU can be taken to new performance heights. The only limitation will be the quality of the copper in the CPU itself. The GIGABYTE GA-P55-UD6P is as close to perfect as you can get.

**NAG**

**Neo Sibeko**



### Bottom Line

Best overclocking P55 board on the market.

#### Plus

+ Overclocking features  
 + 24-phase power

#### Minus

- Nothing



ACCESS A WORLD OF  
PURE GAMING BLISS ON  
YOUR MOBILE PHONE

**NAG**

Calling all cyberculture junkies!

Stay up-to-date with the hottest new  
games, previews, reviews and features -  
anytime, anywhere.

Visit the NAG wapsite for cutting-edge  
gaming, computer and technology news.



Get regular updates on your phone  
from SA's leading games magazine.  
Go to **MLNAG.co.za** or sms **MOBI NAG**  
to **33978 (R1,50)** Only network data charges apply.

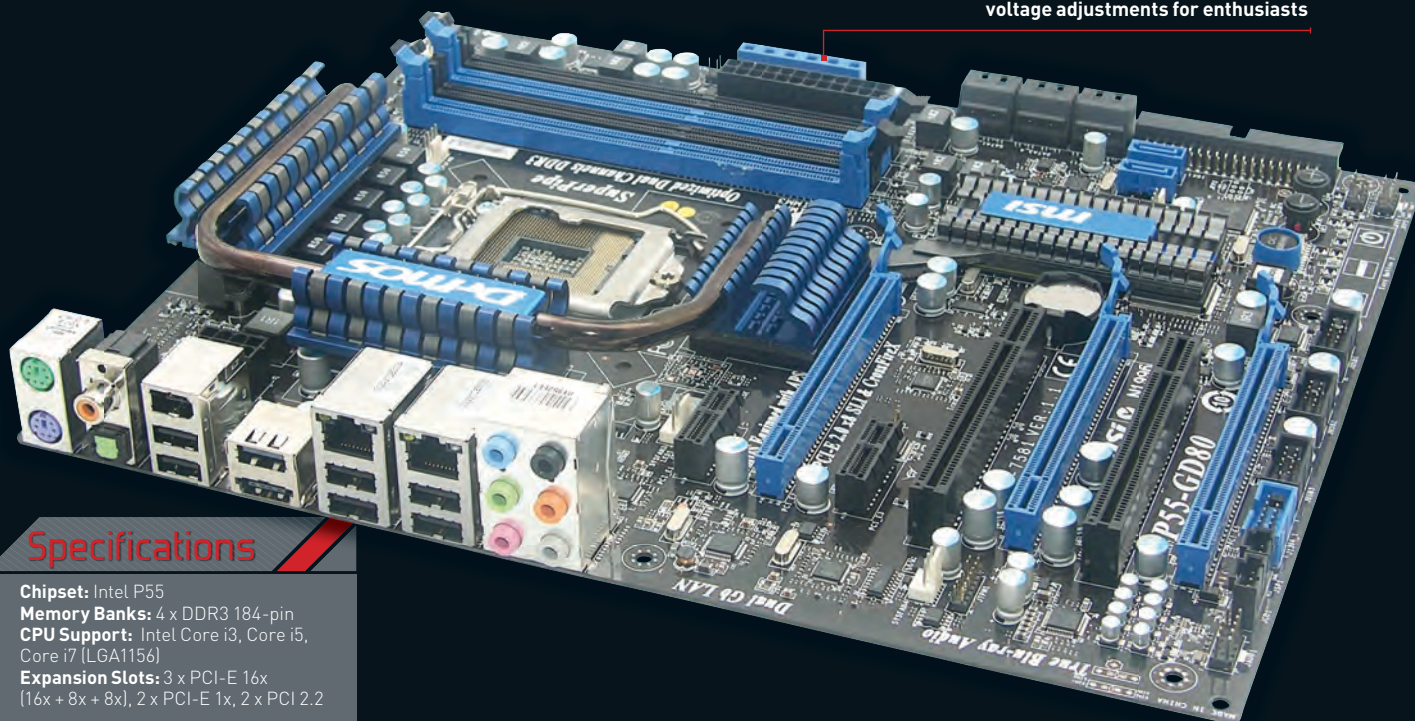


Pssst! Gaming fanatics, check this out...  
For FREE games, video and more, go to the Samsung Fun Club WAP site  
[wap.za.samsungmobile.com](http://wap.za.samsungmobile.com) or SMS MOBI SFC to 33978 (R1.50)

SAMSUNG  
**FUN Club**  
<http://za.samsungmobile.com>



Useful 'read points' and on-the-fly voltage adjustments for enthusiasts



## Specifications

**Chipset:** Intel P55  
**Memory Banks:** 4 x DDR3 184-pin  
**CPU Support:** Intel Core i3, Core i5, Core i7 (LGA1156)  
**Expansion Slots:** 3 x PCI-E 16x (16x + 8x + 8x), 2 x PCI-E 1x, 2 x PCI 2.2

## MSI P55-GD80

**M**SI HAS BEEN STEADILY improving their motherboard designs. No longer playing second fiddle to ASUS and GIGABYTE, MSI seems to have finally caught up with their main rivals, and is producing quality motherboards that overclockers all over the world do not mind using.

As efficient as the X58 line of motherboards from MSI was, the true benefit of the feedback they received from world-class overclockers at their annual MOA gatherings has shown up in their P55 motherboards.

We will say this quite early on: the P55 range of motherboards from MSI is indicative of the progress MSI has made, and without question are the best motherboards produced by the company to date. Virtually everything that you may have thought you knew about MSI motherboards can now be discarded. With the P55 line, the manufacturer is here to compete at the highest level, and is even introducing industry firsts like the P55 "Big Bang" motherboard, which features the Lucid Hydra chip that allows hybrid multi-GPU configurations such as an ATI 5870 graphics card paired with a GTX 285 for a fast, multi-GPU-rendering configuration. When this motherboard will be available remains to be seen, but what is true is that MSI is on the attack and the competition had better look out.

For now, the P55-GD80 is the best P55 motherboard from MSI. Not only does the motherboard look great with its metallic,

grey-and-black colour scheme, but the board is loaded with great features such as dual Gigabit LAN, optical out, eight SATA ports, a POST LED, power and reset buttons, a Clear CMOS button and a very interesting V-Switch feature.

V-Switch allows one to instantly add voltage to the VCore, VTT, VDIMM and PCH voltage using a DIP switch. Not only that, but MSI has added voltage-monitoring points on the board for enthusiasts, which will allow one to monitor various voltages in real time. Since this will be done with a multimeter, it will allow users to keep a close eye on every voltage to diagnose any problem or instability issue.

In terms of performance, the board is just as capable as the others. It clocks well enough and we managed a comfortable 214MHz on the BCLK without too much BIOS tweaking. The best thing about the MSI board is the BIOS. This is where MSI has made huge strides, and the amount of control users have over their systems is incredible.

With LGA1156 CPUs there is even less to tweak or configure than with the i7 (LGA1366) or any other platform, but if it is possible to tweak, MSI has the option in the BIOS. Overclocking the memory is also much easier on P55 chipset boards; and with this motherboard, we were able to match the speed of the competitors' motherboards, making it the first time ever that we were able to do this with an MSI motherboard. "Massman", a

well-know overclocker, managed a comfortable 239MHz BCLK using liquid nitrogen with a similar Core i7-750 CPU we used to test with. This once again 'proves' the power of the MSI P55-GD80 motherboard design.

The MSI P55-GD80 is one of the better high-end P55 motherboards on the market. While it may not be the highest-clocking board around, that could certainly change with BIOS revisions, as the hardware is certainly there.

The P55-GD80 is by far the most impressive product we have seen from MSI in a very long time and certainly the best motherboard the company has ever produced. As such, it receives our recommendation. Paired with either an 860 or 870 CPU, it will make for a great overclocking and gaming platform that's possibly better than their X58 solutions. **NAG**

Neo Sibeko

|  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| <div>★★★★★</div> <div>Bottom Line</div> <div>The best motherboard from MSI ever.</div> |                        |
| <b>Plus</b><br>+ Features<br>+ Three PCI Express 16x slots                             | <b>Minus</b><br>- None |



NEED HELP?



We might not be able to help you out in this situation, but we wouldn't be surprised if you called us first. We strive to be the best internet support team in South Africa, and the best thing is...

Our support comes free with all of our connectivity and hosting packages. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

**Imaginet**

**INTERNET SERVICES**

[www.imaginet.co.za](http://www.imaginet.co.za) | 086 111 1101





## Specifications

**Chipset:** Intel P55  
**Memory Banks:** 4 x DDR3 184-pin  
**CPU Support:** Intel Core i3/Core i5/  
 Core i7 (1156)  
**Expansion Slots:** 2 x PCI-E 16x (16x +  
 8x), 2 x PCI-E 1x, 3 x PCI 2.2

## ASUS P7P55D

**H**ERE AT NAG, WE usually find ourselves reviewing and testing only the best motherboards from each manufacturer. Most of these boards do a spectacular job at what they are intended for. However, not everyone is interested in such high-end boards, and not everyone can afford to spend vast amounts of money on a single component that more often than not costs more than an entry-level gaming machine.

This time we were fortunate enough to receive the P7P55D motherboard from ASUS. Not only is it based on the P55 LGA1366 platform, which already makes it cheaper than X58 motherboards, but it is one of the cheaper boards in ASUS's P55 range.

Most people by now are probably thinking that this motherboard is severely lacking in one aspect or another, but that's not the case. In fact, the P7P55D is a fully featured board only lacking one or two features that are available on ASUS's more expensive boards.

What you do not get on the P7P55D is a POST LED and on-board power, reset and clear CMOS switches. The board only has a single BIOS chip (removable) and doesn't support the ROG station at all. Also missing from the features list is SLI capability, which every P55 motherboard we have reviewed thus far has. However, given that an SLI licence costs money, it is understandable why this feature has been left out.

Despite not being SLI-capable, the board has full support for ATI's CrossFire technology; and right now, with the Radeon 5000 series, there has never been a better time to consider CrossFire graphics.

The board itself is simply laid out and features a 12+2-phase power system that is more than enough for any CPU that is available for this platform. The full-length PCI Express slots are placed a good distance apart, but the single-lane PCI Express 1x slots are situated in between, which will render the slots unusable should you employ a CrossFire or multi-GPU configuration.

Once again, as with other P55 motherboards, we find that there are three PCI slots, which is a bit much and could have been easily replaced with another full-length PCI Express slot. For the most part, however, the board is everything you would expect from a P55 motherboard.

The board supports Express Gate, which means that you can be up and running in a few seconds from boot up. While this used to be a feature exclusive to the higher-end boards like the Deluxe range, we are happy that it found its way onto a more affordable motherboard. The BIOS is also packed with tweaking options such as CPU level up and the like, which make overclocking even easier for those who are not too familiar with the settings in the BIOS.

In terms of performance, the motherboard performs just about as well as can be expected from any P55 motherboard. The 3D benchmarks were a little slower than on the other boards, but Super PI, wPrime, PiFast and the like were faster. These small differences are unlikely to make a difference in everyday use or even gaming, but they are worth noting if you are an enthusiast on a tight budget.

ASUS has put together a great motherboard: not only is it affordable, but it performs well and has all the necessary features and functionality to make it a great motherboard for a mid- to high-end gaming computer. The P7P55D may not have SLI capabilities, but it just might be the most practical and cheapest way to get onto the P55 platform without making huge sacrifices in terms of performance and the feature set. **NAG**

Neo Sibeko



### Bottom Line

One of the better P55 motherboards on the market.

#### Plus

+ Express Gate  
 + MemOK! feature

#### Minus

- No SLI support



# SA COMPUTER MAGAZINE

# SACM

WWW.SACM.CO.ZA

- ▶ Acer Aspire One
- ▶ TomTom White Pearl
- ▶ DataDot Asset Identification Kit
- ▶ ASUS External Blu-ray drive
- ▶ Wolfenstein
- ▶ Guitar Hero 5
- ▶ Need for Speed: Shift

**How To**  
Sign up for a US  
iTunes account

## Music on the Move

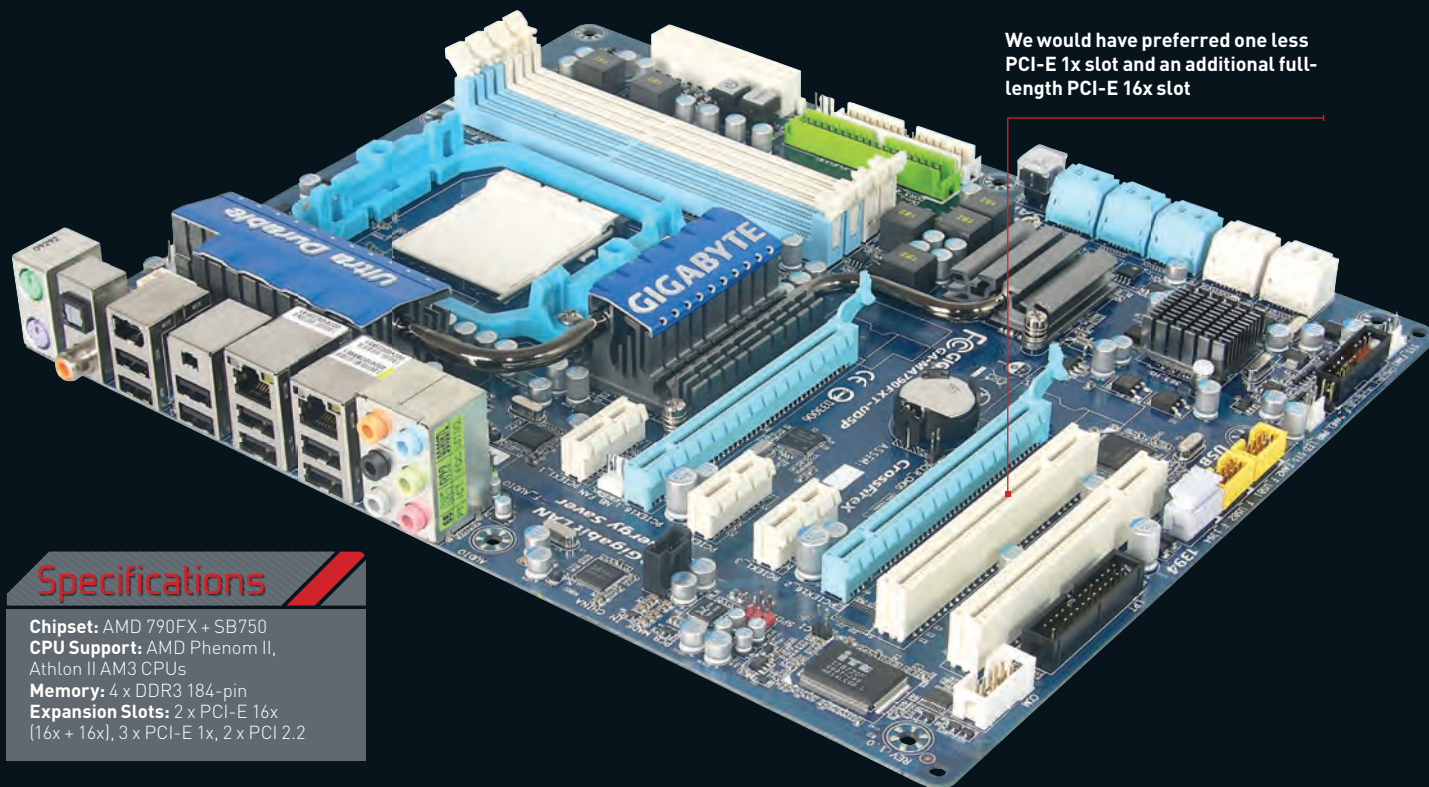
6 Music Phones rated



R32.95 (INCL VAT) VOL 17 ISSUE 07 11.2009

If we don't review it, you don't want it.





We would have preferred one less PCI-E 1x slot and an additional full-length PCI-E 16x slot

## Specifications

**Chipset:** AMD 790FX + SB750  
**CPU Support:** AMD Phenom II, Athlon II AM3 CPUs  
**Memory:** 4 x DDR3 184-pin  
**Expansion Slots:** 2 x PCI-E 16x (16x + 16x), 3 x PCI-E 1x, 2 x PCI 2.2

# GIGABYTE GA-MA790FXT-UD5P

**O**NE OF THE BEST things about the AMD platform is that the motherboards are relatively inexpensive. Even the very high-end boards, like the one here, are relatively cheap, especially when compared to what the competition has to offer with the P55 and the X58 motherboards.

Having said that, there are some trade-offs in feature support, such as the absence of SLI in the vast majority of the motherboards; but then again, that should not deter anyone from buying into the AMD platform.

Before we get into what the GA-MA790FXT-UD5P is capable of, it is better to tell you what it will not support and the features that it lacks. Only two graphics cards can be installed on this motherboard, which means you won't be able to use three 4890, 4870, 5850 or 5870 graphics cards. You are thus limited to traditional CrossFire and 4-Way CrossFire by means of X2 cards.

While this might not be an issue for many people, we would have liked to see the omission of two of the PCI Express 1x slots, and possibly just leaving one traditional PCI slot in favour of a third PCI Express 16x slot. However, GIGABYTE has gone with this configuration, which is the only significant downside to this motherboard.

Other than that, everything else is among the best in the business. In fact, the GA-MA790FXT-UD5P is the best performing and overclocking

motherboard based on the AMD platform to date. The GA-MA790FXT-UD5P features an 8+2-phase power system, all the UD3 (Ultra Durable 3) advancements and a BIOS that's perfect for every level of user there is (from the beginner to the hardened liquid helium user).

Oddly enough, as the company's highest-end AMD AM3 motherboard, there is some functionality missing that you can find on comparable Intel platform boards, like a Clear CMOS button, a power and reset button and most importantly a POST LED. All these features are absent from the GA-MA790FXT-UD5P, which is somewhat disappointing given what the motherboard is capable of.

This board features eight USB 2.0 ports at the rear, ten SATA 3Gb/sec ports, dual Gigabit LAN, optical out and an 8-channel audio controller with Dolby home theatre support, positioning it as a high-end enthusiast and power-user motherboard.

Not only were we able to clock a Phenom II 965 Black Edition to 4GHz using a Zalman CNPS9500 cooler, but we also managed a nice NB frequency of just above 3GHz. The most impressive aspect, however, is how the motherboard is able to change between 2T and 1T memory timings without missing a beat or causing instability. We even managed to run the memory above 1,600MHz, which is fairly high for an AMD-based board. The HT speed (useful for those not using unlocked CPUs) was incredible and kept increasing with no sign of stopping at any time.

After we reached 280MHz, the testing became pointless: it was clear that the motherboard could reach 300MHz.

This incredible overclocking headroom and stability seem to be unmatched by any other board on the market. Sure, there are those that can clock to 250MHz (like we have witnessed with previous AMD boards), but none of them is able to match the high HT speed, with a high Northbridge frequency and high memory speeds.

This combination allowed the Phenom II 965 Black Edition we used to 'beat' a number of Core i5 and i7 CPUs. If an AMD platform is what you want, and you have no need for 'exotic' CrossFire configurations, then the GA-MA790FXT-UD5P is the best board on the market right now. This is particularly true for enthusiasts and power users. The GA-MA790FXT-UD5P is the fastest AM3 motherboard we have ever tested.

**NAG**  
**Neo Sibeko**



## Bottom Line

The fastest and most overclockable AM3 motherboard to date.

### Plus

- + Incredible overclocking headroom
- + DDR3 1600 support

### Minus

- Only two full-length PCI Express slots
- No POST LED

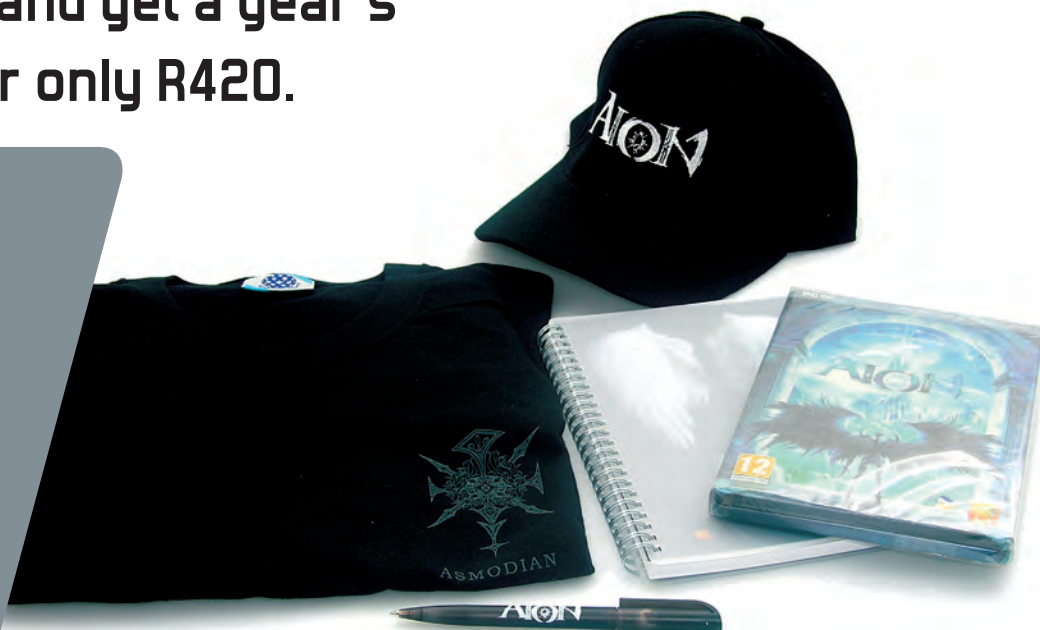


# Subscribe to NAG

Subscribe now and get a year's worth of *NAG* for only R420.

Three lucky subscribers will win Aion hampers, each consisting of the PC game, T-shirt, cap, notebook and pen!

Renewals also qualify.



**megarom**  
interactive

SEND MY COPY OF NAG TO:

Full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

**PAYMENT METHOD (PLEASE CIRCLE):** Bank deposit / Cheque / Credit Card / Postal Order

Credit card number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry date: \_\_\_\_\_

CCV number: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

- Order by phone: (011) 704-2679
- Order by fax: (011) 704-4120
- Order by e-mail: [subs@tidemedia.co.za](mailto:subs@tidemedia.co.za)
- Order by post: Tide Media, P.O. Box 237, Olivedale, 2158

**Bank account details for direct deposits –**

Tide Media, Nedbank Fourways, Account number: 1684112125, Branch code 168405

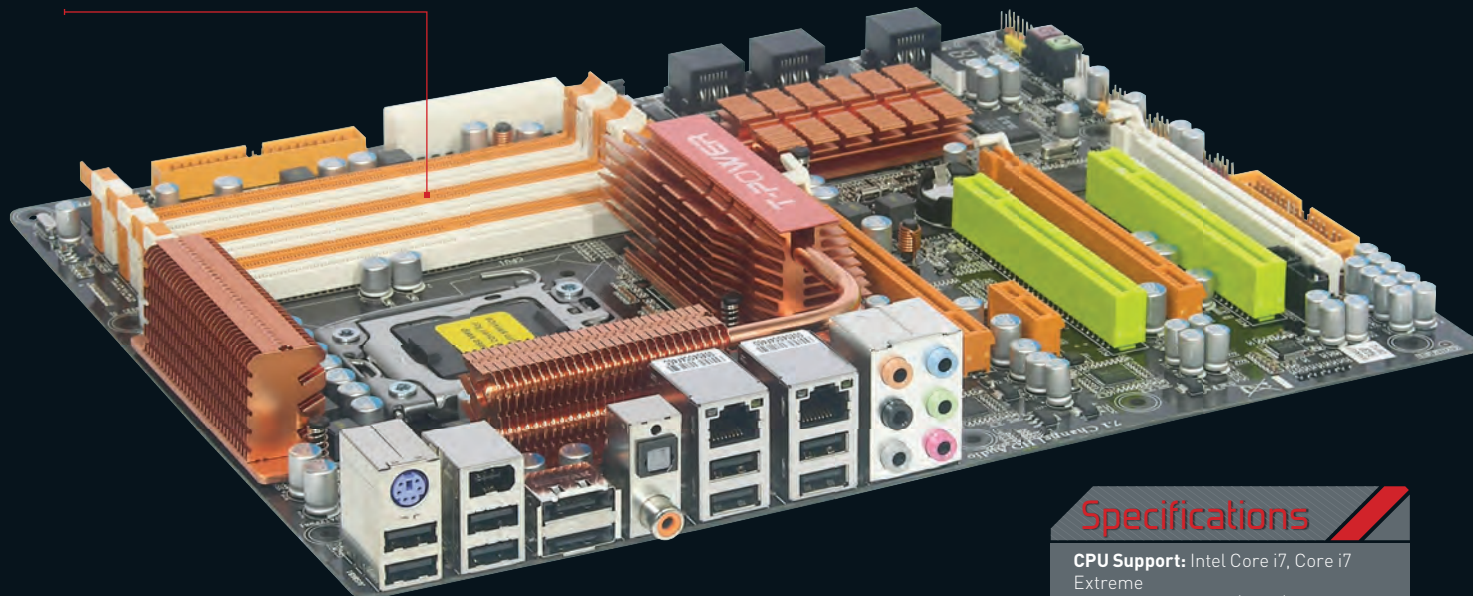
Once you have paid the money into our account, fax a copy of the subscription form plus the bank deposit slip to (011) 704-4120. No deposit slip = no subscription. Please make cheques and postal orders out to Tide Media and then post the completed form to NAG Subscription Department, P.O. Box 237, Olivedale, 2158. Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery of your first issue.

\*Please Note: No refunds will be issued for this subscription offer.

**NAG**



The colour scheme is far from normal for a high-end board, and will possibly make or break the sale



## Specifications

**CPU Support:** Intel Core i7, Core i7 Extreme  
**Memory:** DDR3 800/1066/1333MHz (OC)/1600MHz (OC)/1866MHz (OC)  
 6 x DDR3 DIMMs

## BIOSTAR TPower X58

**THIS MONTH, WE HAVE** the new BIOSTAR TPower X58 motherboard for review. Designed for the LGA1366 platform, the TPower is aimed at the high-end and enthusiast markets. With an impressive feature list, and claims of massive overclocking potential, let's see if this board will deliver.

The board has all the features you would expect to find on a motherboard of this calibre: six triple-channel RAM slots, supporting up to 1,866MHz DDR3 RAM; three PCI-E 2.0 slots that support ATI CrossFireX and NVIDIA SLI; dual Gigabit LAN; two eSATA ports; and 7.1-channel surround sound. The board's only weakness is the paltry six SATA ports. With hard drives as cheap as they are nowadays, many enthusiasts will have more than six devices that require a SATA port, and in the TPower's case, they would have to buy a pricy SATA card, or do without. Apart from this, though, the board caters to the enthusiast, but it 'makes little effort' to distinguish itself from the competition.

So, the board does well in terms of features, but how does it look? Enthusiasts like to show off their hardware, and a board that complements the system will often be a 'first among equals'. With its green-and-orange colour scheme on a black PCB, the TPower isn't ugly, but it fails to jump out at you like an

EVGA Classified or a Foxconn Bloodrage would. And good luck matching that green and orange to other components and cables. The looks won't stop you from buying the board, but they sure as hell won't do it any favours.

"Born to break worldwide Overclock records" is what the sticker on the front of the box claims. Now, I've always been sceptical about this sort of marketing. The records that a TPower or any other board, for that matter, claim as their own, are often achieved with extremely good samples of the board; or worse still, a board that has been modded. And more often than not, the board you are buying won't get close to that level of performance. Adding to this, the two examples that BIOSTAR uses to show the overclocking prowess of the TPower aren't even very good ones, which gives you the feeling that BIOSTAR was really struggling.

Enough with the marketing. You want to see numbers. Testing the TPower with an i7-975 and Corsair Dominator GT RAM, we were able to record 4,800MHz using dry ice, with all eight cores enabled. While this may not seem like much (and, indeed, it isn't), you must remember that the 975 was using in testing was a terrible sample, capable on other boards of only 4,800MHz. Still, this was enough to secure us the second fastest wPrime

32M time in the country, against a much higher clocked CPU. In fact, during the entire OC session, the TPower remained stable enough for multiple runs over many hours.

However, during an overclocking session, the TPower's BIOS got corrupted, and we were greeted with the following: "DO NOT BE PANIC! YOU BIOS HAS BEEN CRUSHED!" Now, I don't know about you, but some good English isn't that hard to program into the BIOS. And telling me that the BIOS "has been crushed" is really not a good way to help me calm down. The pinnacle of this, though, had to be reading the extensive instructions on how to fix the error, then restarting the PC only to find that it had fixed itself while we weren't looking. Classic.

**NAG**  
**Derrick Cramer**



### Bottom Line

An average X58 board that is probably worth buying on special

#### Plus

- + Stability under extreme cooling
- + Bios recovery

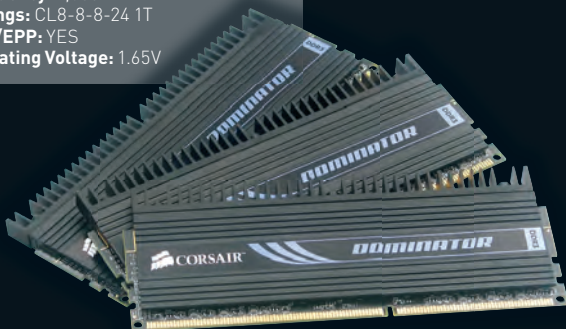
#### Minus

- Looks dated
- Much better options on the market



## Specifications

Frequency: 1,866MHz  
Timings: CL8-8-8-24 1T  
XMP/EPP: YES  
Operating Voltage: 1.65V



# Corsair DOMINATOR PC3-12800 6GB Triple-Channel Kit

**DDR3 MEMORY HAS COME** down in price considerably over the last 12 months, and it is getting increasingly hard to justify why users should still be investing in DDR2; in particular when dealing with triple-channel kits such as the Corsair set we received for review: the price is right and the performance is impressive, to say the least.

This kit is not part of the regular XMS line of products, but part of the legendary DOMINATOR series. While it is true that there is an even higher-end, more enthusiast-focused DOMINATOR GT line of memory, for the most part, this is more than enough for high-end users and the majority of enthusiasts.

1,866MHz may not seem like such a high frequency, considering that we have had memory performing at this frequency since 2007. However, what is important here is that this is specifically engineered for the Core i7 range of CPUs, and that means the operating voltage at this speed is 1.65V. During testing, we even managed a slightly lower voltage of 1.59V while reaching an impressive 1,900MHz at the standard CL8 settings.

With RAM like this, however, it is not the standard speed we are interested in, but how far it will overclock above specification. And this is where the RAM impressed us even more. Not only was the set capable of reaching 2,100MHz, but it did so at a comfortable CL8-8-7-24 1T at only 1.7V. Do note that adding additional voltage to your RAM above specification could void your warranty. However, we have yet to hear of or see a set of RAM being damaged by such a small bump in voltages.

The maximum validation speed we were able to achieve with this RAM (using only two sticks of memory) was 2,200MHz CL9 using a P55 motherboard. This might not be so useful for people on the LGA1366 platform, but is fantastic for LGA1156 users looking to maximise performance on their computers.

Overall, the DOMINATOR set is one of the better sets on the market. For 1156 and AMD platform users, it's best to look at the 1866 4GB set, as it will be cheaper than this set but still provide the same overclocking headroom and performance. For everyone else, if you are in the market for a high-speed overclocking set, you might as well start with the Corsair DOMINATOR PC3-12800 kit. **NAG**

Neo Sibeko



### Bottom Line

Great-looking RAM that performs even better.

#### Plus

- + Performance
- + Overclocking headroom

#### Minus

- None

**Genius**  
Live with Ideas

**Embrace HD Era  
with Genius  
HD Webcam**  
*Yes, i do!*



**eFace 2050AF**  
**High Definition 2.0MP**  
**Auto Focus Webcam**  
UVC/Glass AF/720P HD/Mic



### Webcam Series



iSlim 2000AF  
2MP/UVC/AF/  
720P HD/Mic



eFace 2025  
2MP/UVC/MF/  
720P HD/Mic



eFace 1325R  
1.3MP/UVC/MF/  
IR LED

**AXIYE SYSTEMS CORP.**  
Tel: (886) 2 2995-6645  
Fax: (886) 2 2995-4751  
e-mail: sim@geniusnet.com.tw

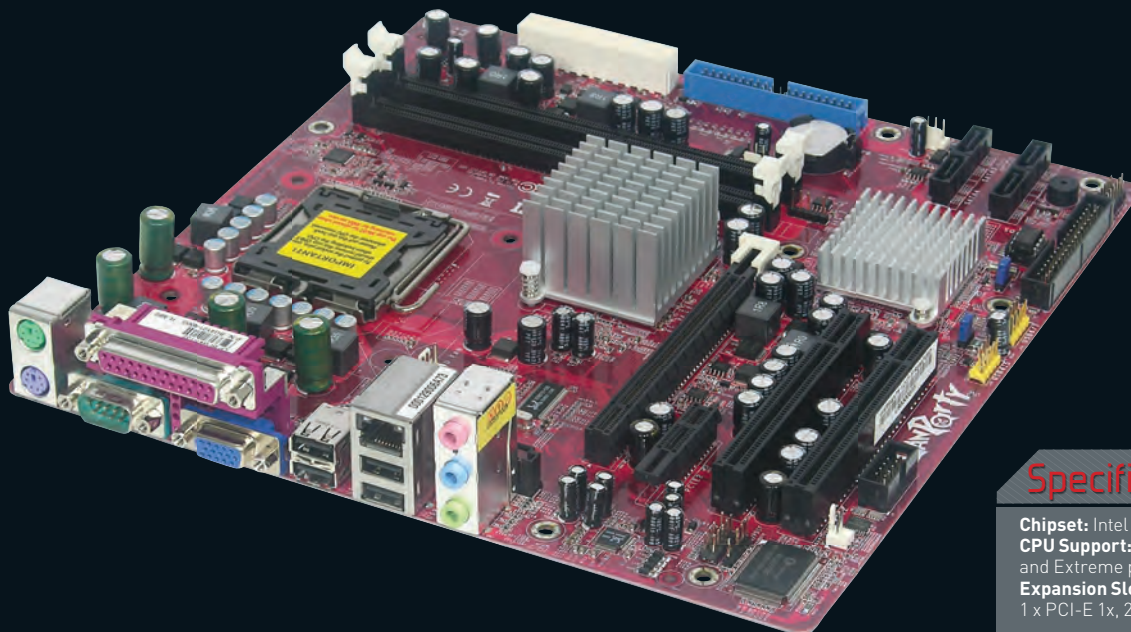
**AXIZ (Pty) Ltd**  
+27 11 2377000  
www.axiz.com

**TVR Computers CC**  
+27 11 8071390  
www.tvr.co.za

[www.geniusnet.com](http://www.geniusnet.com)







This latest LANParty doesn't really even try to 'link' with the extreme DFI products bearing this name from the past.

## Specifications

**Chipset:** Intel G41 with ICH7  
**CPU Support:** Intel Core 2 Duo, Quad, and Extreme processors  
**Expansion Slots:** 1 x PCI-E 16x, 1 x PCI-E 1x, 2 x PCI, 1 x IDE

## DFI LANParty BloodIron G41-T33

**A** MEDIA CENTRE PC IS, ordinarily, an underpowered, under-performing wimp of a rig, preferably rich in multimedia options and low on noise generation. Its microATX boards are usually stripped-down, pared-back incarnations of full-on desktop parts, with limited expansion options, very limited tweaking, and so forth.

On the other hand, if you're an old gamer, the DFI LANParty brand will call up a whole other set of preconceptions. LANParty boards were the most hardcore, most accomplished, and most feature-rich boards money could buy at one stage. These small-volume (relatively) innovators were the ones behind modern enthusiast niceties, such as power/reset buttons integrated onto the board, LED-based error-code reporting, and more LED bling.

But today, we have giants like ASUS and GIGABYTE dominating this enthusiast sector, as they finally awoke to the existence of this niche market space and its importance in the overall market. Late they may have been, but their mammoth resources and platinum partnerships with premiere upstream providers mean that it's tough for the 'bit players' to continue to compete; although, to be honest, the pricing of these boards screams out for a more realistic competitor from small bands of motivated, talented engineers. Perhaps the big players bought these skills out...

Which is why the DFI LANParty BloodIron G41-T33 board is not an enthusiast part, but a media centre-orientated platform - despite the over-the-top name. A little sad, yes, but never mind that. Is it any good at what it does?

Initially it appears to fit well into the market, featuring just one 16x PEG slot, one PCI-E 1x slot, and two conventional

PCI slots. SATA ports are also limited to two, and there are only two DIMM slots available for the DDR3 RAM. All for the sake of saving space.

There is a three-phase PWM system, controlled by solid-state caps lined up along two sides of the LGA775 socket, although the remainder of the board is still covered in the older, less efficient type. Speaking of the CPU slot, the Intel G41 chipset brings dual-channel DDR3 to the realm of older CPUs, with this model supporting Core 2 Duo and Quad but not Core i7.

We plugged 2GB of Corsair XMS3 1,333MHz RAM in, and an old but incredible Pentium Extreme Edition, the mythical 965. Clocked at 3.73GHz per core as stock, this CPU is a legend, and remains the fastest-clocked dual-core processor on the planet. With all the components in place, we booted the BloodIron straight into the BIOS.

And found something of a conundrum. You see, this DFI board sports all the BIOS features and tweaking you'd expect of the old brand, which is to say a huge number of high-end tweaking options, including support for two backup BIOS profiles should anything go horribly wrong. It looks like a thoroughbred overclocking setup in here, not a consumer device. It even picked up the 965 right off the bat, which many boards of its era couldn't do because of the extreme rarity of this CPU, but clocked the Corsair RAM by default to 1,066MHz.

And how does it perform? Well, it's quite good, although not class leading. G45-powered boards tend to beat it in the standard benches, although using the G41 does mean a more appealing price point overall. In fact, perhaps due to DDR3 and perhaps due to a more efficient chipset overall, this SFF DFI actually performed better in system benches than the original

GIGABYTE GA-965P-DQ6 ever did with the same CPU but overclock-friendly Vitesta DDR2 1,000MHz RAM in place.

As for the newly 'uprated' integrated graphics, the GMA X4500, Intel says that it's fully DX10-capable, which is nice. But the performance remains so poor that actually playing a DX10 title on it would be silly.

Finally, it was back to the BIOS to try to overclock the CPU, on older solutions easily capable of 4GHz per core on air. And that was about all we could coax out of the LANParty. Which is somewhat disappointing, as it's a small percentage boost despite the magical '4' being part of the clock speed in gigahertz. Here the old GIGABYTE platform actually did better: it never recognised the CPU as anything more than a 3.4GHz part by default, but could hit 4.4GHz from that base without losing stability.

It is a good board, for what it's meant and its price positioning, but is really no real upgrade over an older Core 2-supporting platform. DDR3 support is not at all an 'essential', and don't be suckered by the new "DX10-capable" integrated graphics either... **NAG**

Russell Bennett



### Bottom Line

A legendary name is forced downmarket with limited success

#### Plus

+ Huge range of BIOS options

#### Minus

- Not much point to them, though



RRP → R4,000 Supplier → Nokia Web → www.nokia.co.za



A proximity sensor determines when the handset is next to a face, disabling touch sensing at such times

## Specifications

**CPU:** ARM 11 434MHz  
**OS:** Symbian OS v9.4, Series 60 rel. 5  
**Screen:** 360 x 640, 2.9-inch, resistive TFT touch screen  
**Memory:** 70MB internal, up to 16GB microSD  
**Camera:** 3.15 megapixels, LED flash

# Nokia 5530 XpressMusic

**TOUCH-SCREEN TECHNOLOGY CERTAINLY LOOKS** to be the way of the future. Although touch-screen phones and similar devices have been around for some time, it seems that the iPhone has really popularised this format. Now, just about every manufacturer is releasing its variants, with varying degrees of success. Nokia's offerings are certainly among the better ones out there – hardly surprising, given the company's track record.

This is, essentially, a slightly cut-down version of the 5800 XpressMusic, an excellent phone all round. The 5530 is slightly more compact, and is a pleasure to use thanks to how comfortably it fits in the hand. All of its front-face controls are touch-based, though there are a couple of more traditional buttons on the sides. The SIM card can be inserted (but not removed) without removing the battery, and the micro-SDHC card can be hot-swapped. The battery compartment, unfortunately, feels a bit flimsy, and the battery rattles slightly within it, but this is a minor annoyance that can be remedied with a piece of paper.

The screen is satisfyingly large, in a widescreen aspect ratio, and an accelerometer determines whether the handset is being held in portrait or landscape orientation, and adjusts the view accordingly (in almost every screen, and most applications). It uses resistive touch sensing, meaning that only one touch can be detected at a time, but varying pressures can be applied and detected. It is so well implemented that I almost never had to pull out the stylus – you can even type with fingers and thumbs. This handset features the 5800's XpressMusic button, which opens a strip of important shortcuts, including the gallery, music, browser, and the like.

This phone's only serious downfall is its lack of 3G connectivity. This is a serious drawback, especially given its wide touch screen that begs Internet usage. There is also no GPS, but this is likely to be missed by few. The 3G issue, however, is a major one – especially when you consider that all 'adjacent' models feature varying degrees of HSDPA connectivity. **NAG**

Alex Jelagin



### Plus

- + Very good screen
- + Excellent touch sensing
- + Good for media enjoyment

### Minus

- No 3G
- Flimsy rear side
- Struggles in sunlight

Fujitsu recommends  
Windows Vista® Premium.

**FUJITSU**



Windows Vista®  
Home Premium

# IT with the endurance to match yours

Visit any Makro store for your leading IT Solution

## AMILO Si2654

Ideal for mobility,  
exclusive to Makro



See in store for  
our 3G offer



- Intel® Centrino® Processor Technology  
Intel® Core™ 2 Duo Processor T6400  
(2.00GHz; 2MB L2 Cache; 800MHz FSB)
- Genuine Windows Vista® Home Premium
- 4 GB RAM ■ 320 GB Hard Drive ■ DVD Dual Layer
- Onboard Audio ■ Intel® 5100 Wi-Fi A/G/N
- 10/100/1000 LAN ■ Bluetooth ■ VGA Webcam
- 15-in-1 Card Reader ■ Weighs only 2.25 kg
- 1 Year Collect and Return warranty
- FUJITSU Support Line: 0860 93 4357

**Was R 9 999.00**

**R 8 999.00** (161598)

**makro**

National Call Centre 0860 300 999  
www.makro.co.za

"Makro reserves the right to control the quantity of any item offered for sale. Whilst utmost care has been taken to ensure that prices and illustrations are correct at the time of going to press. Makro cannot be held responsible for any changes, errors or omissions that may occur. Prices exclude accessories used for display purposes. All transactions are subject to Makro trading terms and conditions. While stocks last. 14% VAT included."

For your convenience, use the E-waste hubs at any Makro store to dispose of your electronic IT waste





# GO

BY TARRYN VAN DER BYL

## Office Space

**I'M A FREELANCER. THAT'S** kind of like a private military contractor, except with fewer guns and violence and petty Third World dictatorships, and more getting up at noon and sitting around all day in my pyjamas, playing games and insulting people on Internet forums. It's glamorous like that. I like to think of myself as those guys in *Army of Two*; except, of course, I'm not a guy and there's only one of me. Anyway, while visiting Johannesburg recently, I decided to drop by NAG HQ to see what it's like being a proper office grunt. I had to actually get dressed and everything.

I arrive around nine in the morning, lugging the two platters of cupcakes I'd traded for an extension on my *Halo 3: ODST* review. It is two days to rAge, and the phone's being bum rushed by mommies interrogating Jacqui about security arrangements and porn distribution at the LAN. There's also a massive figurine of Commander Shepard on one of the desks that I forget to steal before I leave.

Throughout the day, there are impromptu meetings just outside the office doors where people smoke, drink coffee, and confabulate the ineffable profundity of existential contingency. Today's topics include the correct collective noun for a group of prostitutes (a shoal), how Michael would look in a thong versus how Michael would look in a mankini and its implications for single women everywhere on the planet, appropriate circumstances for substituting "LOL" for actual laughter, and why I should get a colossal raise and eleven months off each year. Actually, I might've made that last one up a bit, but I'm putting it out there anyway.

**10:18:** A game of *CoD4* has started up.

**11:40:** It's still going on.

**12:06:** It's still going on. Nobody's actually doing any work whatsoever, except me who has this *Halo 3: ODST* review to write. So I'm pretending to work, but I'm actually reading a Wikipedia article about military ranking paradigms, and thinking about something I've been told but can't tell anyone else about because it's a huge secret and Michael will have me assassinated if I say anything more.

**12:34:** Everyone else has swapped over to Nazi Zombies. Dane is incapacitated a whole lot, and his comrades take the opportunity to check for head trauma with their rear ends.

**13:20:** A minor argument breaks out regarding the quality of food ("food") at the Wimpy. Michael makes a bunch of slobbery noises, as we all look on in terror. An expedition to the Dome is laid underway, to look important, inspect the premises, and feed the Rancor.

**14:35:** Michael and Lauren go to the Wimpy. Geoff and I go to Steers, because the Wimpy is \*\*\*\*.

**15:50:** They're playing *CoD4* again. Lauren's gunning everyone down and talking on the phone at the same time, which proves definitively that women are better at games than men.

**15:55:** Some kid calls up the office to ask for a job at rAge. LOL.

**16:21:** They're still playing. Michael is a dirty camper.

**16:37:** Everybody wanders off to do something else somewhere else instead.

How this magazine actually managed to get onto a shelf is a complete mystery. **NAG**





[illegible]

- GamesMaster



XBOX  
LIVE



# GIGABYTE™



The Parltones recommend Gigabyte notebooks



**Myou**

■ My you, my style



**TouchNote™**

■ Touch for the future



**Booktop™**

■ Mobility empowerment



**inNote**

■ In value of profession

GIGABYTE Notebook Series



Windows®. Life without Walls™.  
GIGABYTE recommends Windows.



For more information please visit [www.rectron.co.za](http://www.rectron.co.za) or call 0860 582 835 / For Support call our National Technical Support Line: 0861 788 789

**Johannesburg:**  
Tel: (011) 203 1000  
Fax: (011) 203 1940

**Cape Town:**  
Tel: (021) 555 8200  
Fax: (021) 555 7136

**Durban:**  
Tel: (031) 582 0200  
Fax: (031) 582 0280

**Port Elizabeth:**  
Tel: (041) 398 7082  
Fax: (041) 398 7135

**Bloemfontein:**  
Tel: (051) 430 0000  
Fax: (051) 430 1144